

World Conference on Disaster Reduction  
18-22 January 2005, Kobe, Hyogo, Japan

# World Conference on Disaster Reduction

18-22 January 2005, Kobe, Hyogo, Japan

Proceedings of the Conference

*Building the Resilience of Nations  
and Communities to Disasters*



United Nations  
Geneva, 2005

## NOTE

This publication was prepared by the Inter-Agency secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR) to provide participants of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR), held in Kobe, Hyogo, Japan, from 18 to 22 January 2005, and other interested readers with an easily accessible compendium of the main documents prepared for and agreed by the conference. It includes a compilation of the main preparatory and outcome documents, as well as a succinct summary on the thematic segment. A CDROM is included in the publication. It contains all the other relevant official and unofficial documents circulated at the plenary sessions and during the various clusters of the thematic segment of the WCDR. Information on the public forum and from civil society together with reference documents is also included.

Official United Nations documentation is available in the Optical Disk of the United Nations:  
<http://documents.un.org/simple.asp>

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Geneva, Switzerland, 2005

*This publication is dedicated to the  
victims and people affected by the  
Indian Ocean earthquake and  
tsunami of 26 December 2004*



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## Foreword

January 2005's World Conference on Disaster Reduction was launched with the strong resonance of the powerful earthquake and tsunami that hit the Indian Ocean region on 26 December 2004. The tragedy of those estimated 300,000 deaths and billions in material losses highlighted dramatically the importance of risk awareness, early warning, vulnerability reduction, and sustained attention to disaster and risk management. The conference in Kobe assumed a significance that few had predicted only weeks before. The colossal tragedy in the Indian Ocean intensified the conference participants' own obligations to define clear plans for future progress. This was expressed in the Hyogo Declaration and a tangible approach for further commitment was achieved with the adoption of a visionary Hyogo Framework for Action for 2005-2015.

An international conference cannot be an end in itself - it is a step in a process. This particular step was, however, of significant importance because of the gathering of thousands of committed leaders and political figures, experts, practitioners, academics, volunteers, in dozens of broad and specialized fora. It has resulted in the international community recognizing the necessity and the realistic potential for building the resilience of nations and communities. Through the adoption of a ten-year plan of action, the conference undertook a commitment to decrease substantially the loss in lives and social, economic and environmental assets of communities and countries around the world.

In my closing remarks at the WCDR in Kobe on 22 January 2005, I stated my personal conviction that through the faithful implementation of this framework for action, the number of deaths caused by natural disasters should be halved in comparison to those of the past decade, and that hundreds of lives and millions of livelihoods would be better protected. Our common challenge is to make this happen.

Since the end of January, the secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR) and the members of the Inter-agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction (IATF/DR) and their many partners have been working on implementation plans to translate the Hyogo Framework of Action into reality. Measurable, realistic and achievable indicators and targets that were discussed during the conference's thematic sessions are becoming integral part of governments' and agencies' work plans for the years ahead. It is the responsibility of all delegates and participants in the WCDR to ensure that those objectives are accomplished. The world can become a safer place if we all live up to the ambition proclaimed - and dedication expressed - in Kobe.

*Jan Egeland*

*Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs*





## Introduction

The World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR), which took place in Kobe, Hyogo, Japan, from 18 to 22 January 2005, was a milestone in the progress the international community strives for in the broad areas of disaster risk reduction. Called for by the United Nations General Assembly and hosted by the Government of Japan, it brought together some 4,000 people from governmental and non-governmental bodies around the world, with participants from 168 States, 78 observer organizations, 161 NGOs and over 560 journalists.

Structured in three segments: intergovernmental, thematic and public, the conference was a rich forum for exchanging views on many issues related to risk reduction, with the objective to reduce the loss of life and assets of populations in risk-prone areas. The Hyogo Framework for Action adopted by the conference provides valuable policy direction and practical guidance for the next decade across many areas related to risk management and disaster reduction.

This publication aims at presenting the primary official WCDR documents together with a summary on the thematic segment of the conference in an easily accessible format. It is supplemented by a CD-ROM that includes all documents from the WCDR that have been posted on the conference's website (<http://www.unisdr.org/wcdr/>). As such, this publication is a comprehensive reference for officials, researchers, practitioners in disaster risk management and prevention.

The conference secretariat created within the Inter-Agency secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR) has worked closely with organizations grouped in the Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction (IATF/DR). The success of the conference, in its three components, has to be attributed to the excellent inputs received from so many partners, including members of the IATF and of many bilateral and multilateral governmental and non-governmental organizations and agencies. The secretariat greatly appreciates their efforts and continuing dedication to the subject. Deep gratitude is also extended to the authorities of Japan, Hyogo Prefecture and Kobe City for the excellent arrangements made in hosting the WCDR, and for the benefit of their own experience in disaster reduction, shared so generously with all participants in the World Conference.

*John Horekens*  
*Conference Coordinator*



## Preface

Taking place only three weeks after the tsunami tragedy of 26 December, the World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR) could not have been more timely. Indeed, that colossal disaster was a dramatic shock to Governments and communities alike, reminding them of their vulnerability and of the importance of acting to reduce disaster risk wherever people are exposed to hazards.

The tsunami also reminded us of the need for countries to work together before a disaster strikes. Disasters do not recognize borders. Tsunamis, as well as the frequent tropical cyclones demonstrate that many countries can be affected by a single catastrophic event. Rivers often demarcate two or more countries and flow through many more. Countries located in close proximity often face similar risks and consequently can benefit greatly by sharing resources and cooperating on common initiatives, such as regional early warning systems.

The WCDR was a watershed event that succeeded in placing disaster risk reduction at the centre of national, regional and global political agendas. It revealed the extraordinary wealth of knowledge and practical abilities that exist today about disaster risk reduction - which are not necessarily being applied, as they should. The tools exist; what is needed is the political will to translate words into action by applying human and technical resources already at our disposal.

The Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters is a guide for our disaster reduction efforts in the next decade. More than just a piece of paper, the Framework offers the guiding principles, priority areas and practical means of achieving disaster resilience for vulnerable communities.

All stakeholders have a role in implementing the Hyogo Framework for Action. The ISDR secretariat is committed to its realization by supporting its partners' efforts, particularly those of United Nations Member States, UN agencies and other members of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction.

The international community has to intensify the momentum generated by the World Conference on Disaster Reduction and ensure that risk reduction assumes a higher priority over the next ten years. Now is the time to act to reduce disasters by fulfilling the pledges made in Kobe: making the world a safer place.

*Sálvamo Briceño*

*Director*

*UN Inter-Agency secretariat of the*

*International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR)*



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**VIDEO MESSAGE TO THE WORLD CONFERENCE  
ON DISASTER REDUCTION  
Kobe, 18-22 January 2005**

Dear friends,

Let me thank the people and Government of Japan for hosting this conference, for its leadership on disaster reduction worldwide, and its leading role in the response tsunami disaster in Asia. Such leadership is now essential.

Rarely has a tragedy made a conference so topical and timely as this one. The tsunami was an unprecedented, global natural disaster. I think we are already seeing an unprecedented, global response.

But it's not enough to pick up the pieces when a tragedy like this happens.

We must draw and act on every lesson we can, and prevent such tragedies occurring in the future.

The tsunami catastrophe confirmed a trend that was already evident before. Over the past 10 years, the number of people killed by natural disasters has increased by almost fifty per cent from the previous decade. The loss of human life has been matched by a rise in the loss of livelihoods and a huge cost to development.

But at the same time, we have learnt a great deal about what works to reduce the impacts of disaster -- in terms of preparedness before it strikes, and mitigation once it does. We have learnt about the value of investing in changed behaviour.

Friends,

The world looks to this conference

- to help make communities and nations more resilient in the face of natural disasters;
- to mobilize resources and empower populations;
- and finally, to galvanize global action and build on our experience.

The United Nations family will spare no effort in working to make the thinking and the findings of this conference a reality.

I thank every one of you for your commitment, and wish you a most productive session.



# Review of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World

A/CONF.206/L.1  
20 December 2004

# World Conference on Disaster Reduction

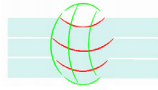
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**Review of the Yokohama Strategy and  
Plan of Action for a Safer World**

## **Review of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World**

### **Note by the Secretariat\***

The present document has been prepared in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 56/195, paragraph 18, and 57/256, paragraphs 4, 5 and 7, where it was proposed to undertake the review of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World (1994), and to report its conclusions at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR).

The document has benefited from views expressed at the ninth and tenth sessions of the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction, which were held on 4 and 5 May and on 7 and 8 October 2004, respectively. Additional comment has been provided by the Governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations that attended the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference, on 6 and 7 May 2004, and later upon their consideration of the Draft Review of Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World (A/CONF.206/PC(II)/3) at the second session of the Preparatory Committee, on 11 and 12 October 2004.

The Conference secretariat intends to disseminate comprehensive material reflective of the Yokohama Review process through various products for different audiences.

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\* This document was submitted late due to the extensive internal and external consultations that had to be undertaken.

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# I. Introduction

## A. Background

1. In its resolution 57/256, the General Assembly requested a review of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World, Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation and its Plan of Action. The Secretary-General proposed that this review of the Yokohama Strategy (“the Yokohama Review”) be carried out by the secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) in consultation with relevant stakeholders. The Assembly reiterated that request in its resolution 58/214, and stated that the review should be concluded at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction at Kobe, Hyogo, Japan, from 18 to 22 January 2005.

2. The Yokohama Review has been an analytical process covering the period from 1994 to the present. The resulting document reflects the current state of awareness and accomplishments, limitations and constraints, and presents consolidated observations about global disaster risk reduction.<sup>1</sup>

3. Growing understanding and acceptance of the importance of disaster risk reduction depend on the subject’s embodiment in global commitments to sustainable development, most clearly expressed in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development,<sup>2</sup> especially through its provisions on vulnerability, risk assessment and disaster management. The end of the period 2005–2015 will coincide with the Commission on Sustainable Development’s review of disaster management and vulnerability within its fifth cycle (2014–2015), as part of the follow-up to the Summit. The year 2015 is also the target for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, with which disaster risk reduction is inherently linked.

## B. Methodology and reference material

4. This review takes account of documentation from the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR), and since 2000, from the ISDR. These sources have been supplemented by the experience and views provided by Governments, institutions and individuals engaged in disaster and risk management or the various dimensions of sustainable development, with increasing attention being paid to poverty eradication programmes.

5. The conclusions of the IDNDR Programme Forum and the Proceedings of the Sub-Forum on Science and Technology in support of Natural Disaster Reduction, and the final report of the IDNDR Scientific and Technical Committee (A/54/132 and Add.1) catalogued many initial accomplishments and highlighted areas for future attention.

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<sup>1</sup> The updated phrase ‘disaster risk reduction’ is used throughout this document to denote the conceptual framework of elements considered with the possibilities to minimize vulnerabilities and disaster risks throughout a society, to avoid (prevention) or to limit (mitigation and preparedness) the adverse impacts of hazards, within the broad context of sustainable development. (*Living With Risk*, Vol. II, Annex 1, Terminology: Basic terms of disaster risk reduction, ISDR, 2004).

<sup>2</sup> *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August – 4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

6. The recommendations in Assembly resolution 54/219 that launched the ISDR provide further confirmation of Member States' intentions to improve intersectoral collaboration and the coordination of disaster reduction commitments within and beyond the United Nations system. The Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction (IATF/DR) was created to coordinate strategies and policies for disaster reduction with the efforts of the secretariat of the ISDR to ensure synergies between organizations of the United Nations system and activities in the socio-economic development and humanitarian fields.<sup>3</sup> The ISDR Framework for Action (2001) further identified priority areas for implementation.

7. Since 2001, the ISDR secretariat has collected information on policy, technical and awareness-raising activities aimed at reducing disaster risks around the world. This has involved the participation of many organizations and documentation of their accomplishments spanning humanitarian, environmental, technical, and development endeavours associated with numerous global agendas.<sup>4</sup> More than 50 regional and thematic consultations organized by partner organizations with ISDR support during 2003 and 2004 have provided the benefits of experience and insight to the Yokohama Review.

8. Many examples of achievement and related information about global experience in disaster risk reduction appear in the two-volume sourcebook and directory *Living with Risk: A global review of disaster reduction initiatives* (United Nations, 2004) and in the subsequent ISDR publication *Know Risk* (forthcoming, United Nations, 2004). A set of three CD-ROMs prepared by the ISDR secretariat, *Disaster Risk Reduction 1994–2004*, provides global statistical information, country profiles, resource documents, selected professional commentary, and practical experience from more than 120 countries.

9. The crucial relevance of the multiple relationships between disaster risks and development is elaborated in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) publication *Reducing Disaster Risk: a Challenge for Development* (2004), including a Global Disaster Risk Index, compiled with contributions from the United Nations Environment Programme – Global Resource Information Database (UNEP-GRID) and the ISDR secretariat, among others.

### **C. Hazard, vulnerability and risk reduction: the basis for commitment**

10. Considered together, the Yokohama Message and the Principles of the Yokohama Strategy distil the essence of the strategy and its Plan of Action for a Safer World: unless disaster risk reduction becomes part of countries' development plans and programmes at all levels, progress in social and economic development will continue to be eroded by recurring disasters.

11. Since the Yokohama Strategy was adopted, there have been about 7,100 disasters resulting from natural hazards around the world. They have killed more than 300,000

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<sup>3</sup> UN General Assembly resolution 56/195

<sup>4</sup> IATF Information Paper, *Extracts Relevant to Disaster Risk Reduction from International Policy Initiatives 1994–2003*. (4-5 May 2004).

people, and caused more than US\$ 800 billion in losses.<sup>5</sup> Some estimates suggest that well over 200 million people have been affected every year by 'natural' disasters since 1991.<sup>6</sup>

12. Two-thirds of the recorded disasters since 1994 were floods and storms. These included record rainfall episodes, extraordinary floods, and unprecedented storms distributed across each of the five continents. The severity of Hurricane Mitch alone eliminated more than 10 years of development gains in some parts of Central America.

13. It was equally a period of extremely severe and protracted droughts, at times accompanied by record-setting temperatures in many parts of the world. The years 1998, 2002, and 2003 globally averaged were the warmest on record. Exceptional heat waves in Asia and Europe killed thousands. Such natural conditions combined with human behaviour as unprecedented and often uncontrollable wildfires occurred on all five continents.

14. The period witnessed one of the past century's most intense El Niño episodes in 1997-1998, resulting in the widespread droughts, flooding and other weather changes. These events had a heavy impact on agriculture and food security, health and infrastructure. Losses have been estimated at 20,000 lives and \$35 billion in material damages.

15. The scientific understanding on climate change, as set out in the periodic assessments of Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), has grown firmer since 1994, as has public and government concern in many countries. Global average temperatures are increasing, sea levels are rising, and glaciers are retreating. However, it is not established whether extreme weather conditions that lead to disasters have changed significantly. IPCC reports project that intensified drought and high rainfall conditions are likely in the future, in some regions. Intense debate continues internationally on what the long-term impacts will be and about how best to tackle the problems.

16. Although geological disasters accounted for only about 15 per cent of the recorded events during the past 10 years, they resulted in one-third of the 300,000 fatalities. A sequence of highly destructive and deadly earthquakes between 1999 and 2004 raised public outcry about the needlessly high number of fatalities and the lack of public safety afforded to public facilities, especially schools. Severe landslides and debris- and mud-flows, which often demonstrate the compound effects of hydrometeorological, geological and environmental hazards, accounted for another 40,000 deaths.

17. As forceful as these severe hazards have been, their effects have been much greater because of the inadequately addressed vulnerabilities of the communities affected, particularly in developing countries. While only 11 per cent of people exposed to natural hazards live in low human development countries, they account for more than 53 per cent of total recorded deaths.<sup>7</sup> Analysis conducted by UNDP emphasizes that both vulnerability and hazards are conditioned by human activities, often disclosed by fewer institutional capabilities or the limited application of existing knowledge.

18. Rapid urbanization shapes disaster risks through a complex association of concentrated populations, social exclusion and poverty compounded by physical vulnerability. This can be seen in the consequences of unsuited land use, inadequate

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<sup>5</sup> Munich Reinsurance NatCat Database, compiled for the ISDR secretariat in April, 2004.

<sup>6</sup> Jan Egeland, United Nations Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs, and Chair, United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction, Introductory Comments, IATF-8 Meeting, 5-6 November 2003, Geneva.

<sup>7</sup> *Reducing Disaster Risk*, Op cit. pp. 10, and 88-89.

protection of urban infrastructure, ineffective building code enforcement, poor construction practices and limited opportunities to transfer or spread risk.

19. In rural areas too, livelihoods are placed at increasing risk because of conditions such as poverty, declining natural and land resources, and other economic and social pressures linked to global development patterns, the attractions of urban life, and rising pressure in international markets. All of these conditions, which deepen vulnerability and spawn risk, continue to be tolerated despite existing knowledge, policies and technical abilities — insufficiently applied.

20. As the potential for disasters has increased significantly, officials and the public are gaining a clearer perception of conditions of vulnerability. There is mounting evidence of better understanding about the relationships between poverty, sustainable environmental practices, the management of natural resources and the relative exposure of populations to both traditional and emerging disaster risks.

21. Wide experience demonstrates that the socio-economic effects and risk consequences of Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) make it more than only a public health issue. Environmental pollution also highlights risk issues that go beyond technical considerations, which include matters of both human and animal health, access to water and food security, and the sustained environmental conditions necessary for gainful livelihood.

22. There are similar concerns about the spatial distribution of risk exposure, which has implications for governance, policy formulation and operational responsibilities. Rivers often demarcate borders, affecting several neighbouring countries when they flood. As storms, fault lines and river basins extend beyond individual countries and recognize no single sovereignty, the simple determination of causes and effects can prove very difficult. Hazard awareness or disaster and risk management strategies must therefore take account of growing transnational and either sub-regional or transregional consequences of contemporary disaster risks.

23. Current trends in vulnerability and in natural, environmental, technological and biological threats to societies reinforce the fact that they are often interrelated, and that they can result in widespread and compound effects. It is therefore crucial that those threats be taken into consideration when developing local risk reduction strategies, drawing upon broad professional and organizational relationships that go beyond more traditional approaches of protection. Both the wider scope of sectoral interests involved and extended geographical exposure hold particular importance for small island developing States, least developed countries and other highly vulnerable societies or groups.

## **II. Accomplishments and remaining challenges**

24. In the past 10 years, concepts associated with disaster risk reduction have advanced in both scope and sophistication. By common acknowledgement, the Principles of the Yokohama Strategy remain valid. The multisectoral and multi-stakeholder emphasis foreseen by the Yokohama Strategy remains crucial for developing a culture of prevention to reduce physical, social, economic and environmental vulnerability and hazard impacts through the enhancement of national and particularly local capabilities.

25. There is evidence of greater official and public understanding that the threat of combined political, economic and environmental consequences of disasters demands more effective means to address vulnerability to current and emerging risks. Many commentators urge that, beyond general recognition and endorsement of these values, significantly greater commitment in practice is required.

26. The use of commonly understood terminology for risk reduction, recognized policy frameworks and implementation mechanisms is increasing. During the past two years, considerable inter-agency effort has been deployed, including IATF/DR participation and the inputs of countries' experiences, to develop a framework for more effective disaster reduction. The following observations are in line with the essential components of such a strategic approach to disaster reduction.

## **A. Governance: organizational, legal and policy frameworks**

### **(i) Foundation policies**

27. Evidence exists of increasing official concern and growing public recognition that there is more to disasters than responding to a destructive event. Virtually all information submitted by Governments cites some measure of national policy or legislation related to the management of disasters; a minority cite strategic risk reduction programmes explicitly or refer to the subject's integration into national planning objectives.

28. Among specialists in many professional disciplines and within the international development community, more attention is now given to vulnerability and the anticipation of potential risk consequences. Among international organizations the subject has resulted in more explicit organizational arrangements within the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), UNDP, UNEP, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the World Food Programme (WFP), the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

### **(ii) Integrating disaster risk reduction into development**

29. Many examples of good practice in disaster risk reduction can be cited from individual sectors such as public health, environment and natural resources management, subsistence agriculture, infrastructure protection or regional planning. Fewer examples can be mentioned of comprehensive national policies.

30. Important insights can be gained from activities undertaken in the past 10 years by countries such as Australia, Bolivia, China, Ethiopia, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mexico, Mongolia, Mozambique, South Africa, Switzerland and Viet Nam. By focusing on an assessment of the threats that disaster risks currently pose to national development objectives, they have shown an increased coherence in reviewing long-standing policies related to disaster management.

31. Other countries, including Colombia, Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Kenya, Romania, the Russian Federation, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Uganda are currently engaged in modifying and updating earlier policies with a more comprehensive and strategic approach to disaster reduction.

32. Regionally coordinated strategies have been productive, resulting in expanded policy awareness and operational capabilities. This has been evident especially in sustained commitments among Pacific states, throughout Asia and in Central American and Caribbean countries and more recently among Andean countries and in Europe. There is also now agreement to pursue efforts among African countries.

33. In many of these countries, decisions have been taken to formulate new and comprehensive strategic policies, rather than only amending existing approaches that were

often derived from assumptions no longer suited to an assessment of current risks. Often those decisions were tied to broader national development policies or political objectives that could command public interest. Importantly, these efforts were planned and are being implemented over an extended time period, reflecting foresight on expected long-term benefits.

34. These policy commitments have involved the highest levels of Government in the process, often with an extended legislative process involving community dialogue, supported by additional technical or sectoral interests. By contrast, implementation requirements often hinge on the development of decentralized, sub-national and local levels of responsibility with the effective mobilization of public interest and participation.

**(iii) Resource requirements**

35. Resource limitations are frequently cited as impediments to initiating or realizing far-sighted disaster reduction programmes. Despite the many calls for mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into development planning, very few resources are allocated specifically from development budgets to realize risk reduction objectives, either at the national level or through international financial mechanisms. Initiatives that encourage the explicit commitment of development funds for disaster risk management need to be supported as a matter of principle and priority.

36. Considering that most resources invested in disaster risk reduction come from the humanitarian sector – a precious resource pool that has barely enough funds to cover response and relief activities – one realistic national viewpoint was that risk reduction components could be incorporated easily into development programmes by government departments at all levels of activity, given the awareness and conviction to do so. It was considered essentially an internal matter for the authorities concerned to allocate development resources to risk reduction endeavours.

**(iv) National platforms**

37. The creation of continuing support for national committees or similarly recognized multidisciplinary, multisectoral and multi-stakeholder national platforms for disaster reduction has been widely advocated. Such platforms are recognized as important mechanisms for advancing national commitments to disaster reduction, but the actual number of vigorous national platforms still remains modest.

38. Whereas a number of national committees during the 1990s were largely notional or primarily technical in orientation, new interest has been evidenced in the establishment of national platforms to address countries' specific exposure to risks. Countries such as China, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, New Zealand and Switzerland have absorbed earlier ad hoc national committees into established governmental institutions so as to ensure closer association with national planning processes, and therefore more sustained attention to risk reduction.

39. Information supplied by countries refers to the catalytic role provided by international advocacy and especially IDNDR/ISDR processes in bringing together existing but often fragmented capabilities and institutional resources within a country. Examples of countries proceeding to capitalize on this motivation to combine technical and official efforts in national platforms currently include Algeria, Armenia, Bulgaria, Canada, Colombia, the Comoros, Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, Djibouti, Ecuador, France, Gabon, Germany, Hungary, Kenya, Madagascar, Nicaragua, the Philippines, the Republic of the Congo, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Spain, Uganda and Zambia.



(v) **Partnerships, public participation and local communities**

40. Beyond the role of official national structures, the recognized value of wider public participation and efforts that span public and private interests has greatly increased during recent years. This has led to some innovative partnerships and other efforts to strengthen relationships among academic or technical expertise, commercial and industrial interests and government authorities.

41. As Governments proceed to adopt more comprehensive disaster risk reduction strategies, particular efforts are required to strengthen the mutually supporting roles envisaged at national, municipal and local levels of activity. Wider opportunities for engagement and more support to non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations, and the promotion of volunteerism remain to be addressed more systematically and effectively in coming years if enhanced and sustained capabilities are to be realized within local communities.

**B. Risk identification, assessment, monitoring and early warning**

(i) **National risk assessments**

42. Risk assessment has most frequently been undertaken as a largely technical activity identified predominantly with the historical occurrence, public exposure and consequences of hazards. As newly emerging risks threaten interconnected interests in a complex global environment, there is need for greater awareness of the social and economic dimensions of vulnerability. This has begun to be addressed through local risk assessments and opportunities that encourage wider public dialogue. These and similar motivational mechanisms enable the wider realization of development principles such as equity, public participation, good governance and transparency.

43. Countries report a need for these more broadly conceived approaches to risk assessment, but also express dissatisfaction with present capabilities to fully undertake them because of perceived limitations of human, technical and material resources. However, experience has shown that risk assessments can bring to light previously unconsidered community interests and resources, thereby serving as positive motivational tools.

(ii) **Data use and methodological requirements**

44. There is increasing recognition of the need for continuous updating of data and related analytical tools, both within countries and regionally in respect to transborder or regional-scale risks and shared resource basins. This requires improved availability and free exchange of data, coupled with retrospective studies of lessons learned and projections of future trends and scenarios, mainstreamed into commonly accepted sectoral practices.

45. Common approaches to the maintenance of national data sets related to hazards and disaster consequences are widely recognized as inadequate. This is evident from an international perspective as well as from countries' own documentation, as information available is frequently partial, dated, sporadic or fragmented. It is often widely dispersed among different authorities or agencies, or shared only with considerable reluctance.

46. To enable countries to assess risks more systematically and to evaluate risk management options better, more standardized data collection and analysis methods are needed. Within countries, there is a requirement for wider and systematic dissemination of information on disaster risks, impacts and management options, particularly in local communities where the actual needs exist.

47. An internationally led effort is suggested to improve standards of hazard data and disaster information, as well as to identify characteristic indicators of disaster effects. Efforts are also required to ensure the free exchange of information. Some progress has been made towards common hazard and disaster statistics in the global EM-DAT International Disasters Data Base. Associated work is being advanced jointly by several organizations in order to gain wide acceptance of a unique disaster GLobal IDentifier (GLIDE) referenced coding system. Annual compilations of global catastrophic events by major reinsurance companies and more consistent rendering of localized disasters by the Latin American Network for Social Study of Disaster Prevention (LA RED) illustrate other valued statistical resources.

**(iii) Emerging risks**

48. Emerging risks have been receiving additional attention both internationally and within many countries throughout the past 10 years, emphasized most recently in the General Assembly resolution 58/215 on natural disasters and vulnerability. Members of the IATF/DR have regularly noted growing concerns about the consequences of urban risks and the associated exposure of complex modern infrastructure. Other development specialists and some national commentators have emphasized threats resulting from the global dimensions of economic development, underlining, for example, a need for greater attention to the interaction between natural and human-induced hazards such as technological risks. Many countries have expressed a growing concern about environmental risks and the potential for serious socio-economic implications that could be linked to changing climatic conditions.

49. A growing trend is evident in some countries' efforts to address all types of risk identification and management related to pre-planning and post-incident actions, whether the 'triggering events' are related to natural, human-induced, environmental or technological emergencies. This rationale is especially relevant for smaller countries or for those that do not have the resources to maintain separate agencies to address different types of emergencies.

50. Methodologies for dynamic assessment and for disaster risk management need to evolve with the changing risk landscapes of disaster risk most pertinent to vulnerable populations where they live and work. This territorial emphasis is particularly relevant to national planning and commitments and to sustainable development expectations, such as those cited for the Millennium Development Goals.

**(iv) Early warning**

51. Early warning is widely accepted as a crucial component of disaster risk reduction. When effective early warning systems are in place, thousands of lives can be saved, as was the case in Cuba during Hurricane Michelle in 2001. Awareness of the importance of early warning systems is growing, owing to the recognition that significantly greater populations and assets are exposed to hazards and to concerns that the characteristics of extreme weather may be changing in the future.

52. Almost all countries maintain services to monitor weather hazards and provide public warnings of adverse conditions. The technological capacities of early warning systems have steadily improved since 1994, through growing scientific understanding of weather and climate processes and other geophysical conditions, improved observation systems and greatly enhanced computer-based prediction and communications technologies.

53. Current warning systems are nevertheless limited, as revealed at two international conferences held in Germany (Potsdam 1998, Bonn 2003). The policymakers, technical

specialists and practitioners involved in these meetings concluded that many countries lacked effective early warning systems, leaving millions at risk, and that the social and policy components of early warning systems had not kept pace with the technological capabilities.

54. A primary limitation is that early warning systems are too often seen in the narrow technical sense of a prediction service, with resulting weaknesses in knowledge of the risks faced, including relevant environmental risks and changing human vulnerability, inadequate communication of warnings, and lack of preparedness and capacity to act on warnings. The role of early warning in sustainable development often is not recognized.

55. Participants at the Bonn conference called for an international early warning programme with specific priorities to assist countries in building early warning systems that would truly reach and serve those at risk. Considerable opportunity exists to improve systems through simply strengthening and better integrating existing capacities and networks. National platforms for disaster risk reduction and national meteorological and hydrological services can play key roles in stimulating this process. Early warning should be incorporated as an essential element of national development policies and plans.

## **C. Knowledge management and education**

### **(i) Information management and exchange**

56. Much of the advancement that has occurred in realizing disaster reduction objectives must be credited to the abundance and widespread exchange among a growing number of users of data, public or private institutional information, and professional experience related to hazards, human vulnerability and the management of risks. No other operational function has been so consistently referred to as being essential for successful disaster reduction achievements as the availability and systematic dissemination of useful information.

57. Many organizations are committed to clearing-house activities that provide disaster risk-related information for the benefit of decision-makers and practitioners or to increase public awareness. The growth of professionally recognized information centres that facilitate the collection, synthesis, and wider dissemination of information pertinent to disaster risk reduction has been a major accomplishment during the past 10 years. Many commentators stressed the need for such a global capacity for disaster risk reduction, specifically encouraging the ISDR secretariat to fulfil such a role.

### **(ii) Education and training**

58. Over the past 10 years, notable achievements have been made in the field of education, training and research related to hazards and risk issues, especially in higher levels of education. This generally affirms the importance of education for creating a culture of disaster reduction, leading to changed attitudes and behaviours over time.

59. The field of education offers numerous advantages for giving more explicit attention to disaster reduction awareness. Teachers are widely recognized leaders; learning and educational facilities are highly valued in local communities around the world. Children are identified as effective communicators, building their own skills and abilities as bases for sustainability. However, specific disaster risk issues have been incorporated into curricula slowly, and explicit programmes of risk education remain the exception rather than the norm in most countries. A gap exists between the growing recognition of the importance of teaching about disaster risks and actually doing it.

60. Considerable scope can be found to relate relevant risk perceptions and awareness to existing course material, although a “lack of resources for teachers and materials” is too easily cited as an impediment. Education-related practical measures offer more encouragement. For example, community involvement in safe building practices for schools is being advanced through local education and demonstration. Good practices are displayed by projects such as EDUPLAN Hemisferico in the Americas, the Kathmandu Valley Earthquake Risk Management Program in Nepal and the United Nations Centre for Regional Development’s (UNCRD) Earthquake Safety Initiative in India, Indonesia, Nepal and Uzbekistan.

61. At higher levels of education and in professional training, more efforts are needed to integrate risk management into other subjects related to the environment, natural resources and sustainable development. The many recognized disaster and risk management training and related promotional centres remain important focal points for regional and international attention in support of national and local endeavours. The Asian Disaster Reduction Center in Kobe, Japan was established in specific response to the Yokohama Strategy. The forthcoming United Nations Decade on Education for Sustainable Development (2005–2015) coordinated by UNESCO offers considerable promise for more attention and support for a wider global exchange of experience.

62. The United Nations inter-agency Disaster Management Training Programme, administrated by UNDP with support from OCHA reflects the training demands of a changing professional environment. It is currently engaged in a strategic review to assess the programme’s strategic focus, purpose and added value considering present trends and future challenges in supporting efforts to build capacities for disaster and risk management.

63. Capacity-building features in many commentaries as another crucial element for realizing disaster reduction objectives. Emphasis is frequently given to the need to build capacity in the most vulnerable communities, as exemplified by the Red Crescent/Red Cross movement’s work with vulnerability and capacity assessments as primary components of local development activities. More attention is needed to develop expanded opportunities for non-governmental organizations, the private sector and distance education in this respect. The wider use of local experience and traditional knowledge also is stressed.

64. Despite growing awareness of community-based training activities, much remains to be done to progress beyond the rhetoric. More candid dialogue among stakeholders at local levels is required to identify longer-term objectives. Needs remain to be determined -- what is actually required, where and by whom, and how can the most appropriate training be provided most effectively. The highly regarded Cyclone Protection Programme for rural communities in Bangladesh provides a good model of sustainable activity over 30 years.

### **(iii) Research**

65. Research related to hazards and disaster risks has expanded greatly during the past 10 years. Globally, particular significance has been given to the sociology of disasters and its multidisciplinary nature, reflecting the importance of human dimensions that in turn highlight the relevance of vulnerability in conditioning people’s exposure to risk. *Disasters by Design* (Mileti, 1999) is a classic example of coordinated research on a national scale involving more than 250 contributors drawn from many professional disciplines. It was funded jointly by more than a dozen Government agencies in the United States and resulted in a comprehensive assessment of national perceptions of risk. The German Research Network for Disaster Reduction is another example of a cross-sectoral initiative created to pursue coordinated research programmes focused on disaster reduction issues.

66. On a regional basis, the European Commission and, in particular the Directorates-General for Research, Information Society Technologies, and the Joint Research Centre,

provide examples of institutional support given to multinational and interdisciplinary research in the fields of natural and technological disasters through successive Framework Programmes for Research and Technological Development. There is a continuing need to promote applied research that assists in mainstreaming vulnerability considerations into development activities. Multi-disciplinary research agendas also need to reflect national and regional perspectives.

67. Economic analyses documenting the financial consequences of disasters and the cost-benefit assumptions of disaster reduction are eagerly sought by decision-makers. There is an equally pressing global interest in demonstrating mitigation benefits and related costs and determining useful criteria to support investment in risk reduction. Current trends in research related to human dimensions of vulnerability, including gender and psychological issues, risk awareness and means to motivate wider public participation in risk management also need to continue.

**(iv) Public awareness**

68. Public awareness is understood as a core element of successful disaster reduction. Since 1986, the annual United Nations Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction remains the most important award for the subject in the world, serving as the primary international awareness-raising instrument of the ISDR secretariat. Experience in the past 10 years demonstrates that public awareness is essential for motivating vulnerable populations to become more active in risk reduction, and for stimulating local communities to assume more responsibility for their own protection.

69. National and local authorities have a crucial role to play in influencing public opinion, reflecting the attention received by the subject in national planning and development objectives. Many countries commemorate the International Day of Disaster Reduction or a similar day of remembrance, information or motivation. However, more strategic, longer-term and better-resourced marketing strategies need to be developed to present clear concepts and more consistent expressions of the practical feasibility of disaster risk reduction.

70. Much more can be done to increase awareness through schools, local organizations and community networks that unite members according to common interests. Considerable interest can be stimulated by weaving disaster reduction subjects into popular culture. Educators and practitioners observe the need for information to be conveyed more imaginatively, with local orientation and more use of vernacular languages.

71. The abundance of information available and the ease of global communications require that messages about disaster reduction be pertinent and clearly focused for specific target audiences. There is a continuing challenge to focus people's attention on their local exposure to hazards and their own immediate vulnerabilities, rather than on the distant disasters that receive extensive media coverage. The media remain greatly underutilized as a resource for mounting more effective public awareness and advocacy campaigns about risk-related issues.

**D. Reducing underlying risk factors**

72. A positive trend has emerged toward the pursuit of risk factors in individual sectoral programmes, with additional attention given to vulnerability awareness in development contexts. This has been important for mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into activities in such areas as education, health, water, agriculture, forestry, environment and physical planning.

73. While many examples are concentrated in single ministries or within a few sectors, countries involved in the Andean Development Corporation have adopted a wider approach. By working through the Andean Regional Programme for Risk Prevention and Reduction formed after the El Niño event of 1997–1998, several sectoral approaches to vulnerability and disaster risk reduction have been coordinated across various ministries, with common purpose expressed throughout the participating countries.

74. This Andean experience is one of several that demonstrates the many skills, abilities and techniques available and widely practised that can reduce people's exposure to disaster risks. Further efforts to consolidate and share technologies and apply existing institutional abilities or resources, especially with developing countries and those in special circumstances, need to be encouraged and supported.

**(i) Environmental and natural resources management**

75. Given the close linkages between disaster risk factors and environmental and natural resource management issues, a huge potential exists for the exploitation of existing resources and established practices aiming at greater disaster reduction. The need for carefully drawn up forest, vegetation, soil, water, and land management measures is increasingly recognized, and such measures are being effectively employed to lessen disaster risks. Widely practised Environmental Impact Assessments lend economic justification and existing techniques to the conceptualization and conduct of hazard and disaster risk impact assessments. Pacific island States are developing an environmental vulnerability index to give decision-makers access to more systematic information with the goal of increasing resilience and building sustainability. The Republic of Korea designates particularly threatened environments as potential risk zones to be monitored closely from both developmental and natural resource perspectives.

76. The retention and restoration of wetlands as advocated by the RAMSAR Convention and the reintroduction of tidal mangrove plantations as pursued by the National Red Cross Society in Viet Nam and non-governmental organizations in Bangladesh have demonstrated benefits from the use of natural resources to reduce disaster risks. The widespread use of traditional farming methods by community-based organizations in Honduras gives emphasis to vegetation and land use for improved land stabilization, reduced water runoff and retarding land degradation.

77. Considerable scope can be found for the development of enhanced relationships and more cross-cutting opportunities among disaster risk management and environmental organizations, particularly by engaging non-governmental organizations such as the World Conservation Union (IUCN), World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD). Increased synergy and resource opportunities also can be pursued together with the work of international conventions, including the RAMSAR Convention on Wetlands, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

**(ii) Social and economic development practices**

78. Most developing countries lack the specific social and economic mechanisms that protect the more vulnerable or disadvantaged segments of the population in economically developed countries. With few institutionalized social security programmes, poor and marginalized people in developing countries have had little recourse in times of crisis, other than typically relying on support from family relationships or community-based mutual assistance. There is growing recognition that programmes of individual social sectors such as education and health, or livelihood concerns such as agriculture and animal husbandry, can spearhead efforts to afford better protection from disasters by reducing vulnerabilities.

79. Community-based initiatives to protect schools, health facilities and local water systems through increased public participation have been pursued for many years by the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) in Latin America and the Caribbean. In the Philippines, the Department of Social Welfare and Development has worked closely with the Office of Civil Defense and grass-roots non-governmental organizations to broaden the social aspects of community support and to build local capacities for disaster risk reduction.

80. By contrast, and for economic and commercial reasons, mechanisms that spread risks more widely throughout a society, such as crop or housing insurance or institutionalized social security schemes, are not so widely available in most developing countries. Although originally thought unfeasible, social and economic initiatives to foster development through grass-roots lending schemes and micro-investment programmes have been applied with considerable success by the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh and more localized social mutual aid funds.

81. Despite a few exceptions such as the relationship between InterPolis Reinsurance and the Kalanjiam Foundation in southern India and a Government-sponsored programme in Viet Nam, few micro-finance or lending programmes can be cited that specifically encourage risk reduction practices among impoverished populations. Some rehabilitation programmes following the Gujarat earthquake in India and other pilot activities in corporate social responsibility in Bangladesh demonstrated the necessity, but also the challenges for development practice and for private investment, of engaging community participation in all stages of these programmes.

82. At macroeconomic levels, evidence of growing institutional commitment to and investment in disaster risk reduction is growing. Among the international financial institutions, the Hazard Management Unit of the World Bank has been instrumental in raising the visibility of investment in disaster risk reduction. It was crucial in forging advocacy links between the private sector, insurance and investment interests in creating the ProVention Consortium, currently hosted by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

83. Following the devastation of Hurricane Mitch in Central American countries and since 2000, the Inter-American Development Bank has made disaster reduction one of the core elements of its lending strategies for development. The Caribbean Development Bank has proceeded to do likewise, and after two years of internal study, the Asian Development Bank announced a newly revised policy in 2004 to promote more disaster reduction through its lending policies. Currently, the African Development Bank in partnership with the African Union, New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the ISDR secretariat is formulating guidelines for countries to mainstream disaster risk reduction into development strategies.

84. Similarly, the insurance industry has routinely been active and visible, by providing compelling statistical documentation and analysis of the disaster risks and their costs to countries. Nevertheless, Governments and insurance companies still face challenges in translating viable risk transfer mechanisms to the uninsured or poorly insured and often small-scale property-owners in developing countries.

**(iii) Land-use planning and other technical measures**

85. Land-use planning has proven an essential tool for disaster reduction by involving risk assessment, environmental management, productive livelihoods and development activities. It is often a critical interface between urban and rural landscapes where natural resources are under greatest threat from growth and development. However, other powerful

short-term economic forces can easily override less obvious long-term risk avoidance perspectives.

86. Similar conditions apply to other technical or structural measures for the reduction of underlying risk factors. Extensive knowledge and technical skills can be exploited to minimize disaster risks by mapping areas of extreme risk, strengthening buildings, protecting infrastructure, and setting standards of construction. Building codes and disaster-resistant construction measures are widely known and are updated with the collaboration of engineers, scientists and other technical specialists in most countries.

87. The extent to which technical measures are employed routinely, or existing standards regularly enforced, is problematic. In many countries the effectiveness of such essential instruments for disaster reduction is often compromised by inadequate political and institutional support.

88. Wide participation of stakeholders becomes essential if the high potential of sustainable regulatory practices is to be realized. This requires the combined interests of risk management, environment, professional and technical abilities, investment and development working for a common purpose, with success closely linked to perceptions about the immediate territorial or community conditions they share.

**(iv) Advanced technologies**

89. The value of advanced technologies for disaster reduction is widely recognized. Their use has increased as the tools have improved, costs have decreased and local access has increased. Techniques related to remote sensing, geographic information systems, space-based observations, computer modelling and prediction, and information and communications technologies have proved very useful, especially in risk identification, mapping, monitoring, territorial or local assessments, and early warning activities. The decade has seen steady improvement in forecasts of severe weather, for example.

90. The use of advanced technologies and associated data sets in environmental management suggests possibilities for synergy and shared approaches with disaster risk management. With decreasing costs, these tools have become much more readily available as routine capacities and more useful at local scales in many countries. More sophisticated monitoring and modelling techniques need to place useable data and results, including early warnings, into the hands of local communities and decision-makers.

91. While countries valued the increased availability of advanced technologies, some were disappointed that their technical capabilities or data were insufficient to make more effective use of them. Many countries recognize the need to minimize duplication, ensure compatibility and promote open exchange of information among different ministries, as well as to facilitate cross-disciplinary applications essential for effective disaster reduction.

92. Several other initiatives that take advantage of space and telecommunications-based applications for disaster reduction are being developed and will be implemented through global and regional strategic partnerships. The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs and the action team of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space are proceeding to implement an integrated global system for the management of natural disaster reduction and relief efforts. A recent global multilateral initiative, involving both developed and developing countries, has developed a framework document for a 10-year plan to implement a Global Earth Observation System of Systems. One of its objectives is the reduction of losses from disasters and improved understanding, assessment and prediction of weather and climate system variables.

93. While the value of technology for disaster reduction is widely appreciated, the benefits are not so easily realized institutionally because of the often rigorous support



systems, sustained resources and technical capabilities required. Therefore, technologically sophisticated countries and organizations need not only to encourage the wider application of these resources in developing countries and for disaster-affected communities, but also to support fulfilment of associated human and technical requirements.

## **E. Preparedness for effective response and recovery**

94. Existing disaster management and civil protection functions within Governments have proved to be important components of disaster risk management. This is evident especially in preparedness activities and contingency planning for which specialized skills, public mobilization, and public information are essential. Disaster managers and civil protection officials can become instrumental in motivating communities to engage in risk-awareness activities, hazard mapping and protection of critical infrastructure. Civil protection agencies also can provide added support and extend their technical knowledge to ongoing training activities. They have much to contribute by conveying lessons from previous emergency operations to help planning processes for future disaster reduction strategies.

95. Most countries have some form of legislated emergency management capacity, but only a minority have realized the strong potential that these agencies represent for developing more comprehensive and strategic approaches to disaster risk identification, awareness and management. As the national authority for all aspects of emergency situations in the Russian Federation, EMERCOM exemplifies revised organizational commitments and expanded capacities to give more emphasis to disaster risk reduction. Other examples of more holistic approaches to risk management and emergency response capabilities are found in Australia, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, France and New Zealand, among others.

96. To increase the level of the awareness and management capabilities required to address current disaster risks, legislation and institutional arrangements are needed that bring together all parties in disaster and risk management sectors to plan and respond in more integrated and better coordinated ways. Joint efforts and the wider sharing of good practices can serve to link the needs of risk awareness and analysis with the operational knowledge and experience of emergency managers. In a wider frame of reference, the supporting roles of other government agencies, local government authorities, essential infrastructure and lifeline utilities managers, business interests, non-governmental organizations and the public itself all need to be factored into a more inclusive and deliberative process.

97. The demand is growing within the emergency management community for the investment of significantly increased resources in preparedness, prevention and mitigation actions. The concern has been expressed that disproportionate amounts are routinely committed by Governments and international organizations to emergency response and rehabilitation, often in haste, resulting in duplicated efforts and without the same oversight generally required for development expenditures.

98. Partly in response to the growing cost and developmental consequences of disasters, the British Department for International Development and the NGO Tear Fund have recently commissioned studies to determine the perceived limitations and constraints in attaining more balanced funding for disaster risk management between the emergency relief and development sectors.

99. Many emergency response and recovery funds can be used only once important social and economic assets have been lost; many fewer resources are invested to minimize losses through prior investment. This suggests an important need for the application of

more effective incentives or deterrents that promote complementary responsibilities and operational functions. Resource requirements also need to be taken into account through a clear understanding of the respective costs and benefits of disaster and risk management.

### III. Conclusions

#### A. Accomplishments

100. Major accomplishments have been made in the realization of the goals of the Yokohama Strategy, increasingly if not universally grounded in understanding among countries that disaster risk reduction is essential for sustainable development, as well as the growing awareness that developmental activities may in some instances also create or worsen vulnerabilities. The Principles of the Yokohama Strategy remain valid as means to guide in the development of policy frameworks to enhance national and particularly, local capabilities in disaster reduction.<sup>8</sup> Internationally, important multilateral agreements related to disaster risk reduction have been reached, including the various conventions related to environmental threats and the specific resolutions, declarations and initiatives pertinent to achieving sustainable development, notably the Millennium Development Goals.

- Countries have forcefully expressed well-founded interests through policy statements such as the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, which call for international and regional commitments and national actions to reduce vulnerability, undertake risk assessments and pursue comprehensive disaster and risk management strategies. However, it is widely considered that more tangible commitments are necessary to translate these expressions into action.
- There is evidence of expanded global understanding of the relationships between poverty, sustainable environmental practices, the management of natural resources and global risks, such as concerns associated with climate variation, urban growth, global health issues, and modern technology. The need for more integrated approaches to disaster and risk management is being validated as new strategic policies and implementation approaches are being adopted in a growing number of countries.
- Positive, if partial, progress has been made towards mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into national planning and development strategies. Progress is currently more evident at international and some regional levels, such as the consolidation of the IATF/DR, the advocacy of international financial institutions and supporting efforts of some United Nations regional economic commissions.
- Particular regard is shown for the important motivational and sustaining values of regional/sub-regional political, technical, educational and information institutions in helping to build, coordinate and support countries' disaster reduction strategies.
- In contrast to the earlier emphasis on largely scientific and technical approaches and the frequent employment of physical techniques to mitigate the effects of natural hazards on national populations, considerable progress is evident in the expanded and more inclusive focus on the social dimensions and multisectoral interests of human vulnerability.

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<sup>8</sup> Such indicative relationships are noted in A/CONF.206/PC(II)/3 Annex of 8 September 2004.

- More interdisciplinary and organizational relationships are being developed, with a wider appreciation of the essential principle of partnership and equitably shared responsibilities and resources. Unless attention is paid to public risk exposure at local levels, individual countries' efforts risk being focused disproportionately on international outlooks or towards centralized national levels of responsibility.
- Considerable knowledge, skills and technical abilities exist to minimize the effects of hazards and to reduce people's vulnerability and exposure to disaster risks. These abilities are applied to significant beneficial effect in some countries, but very unevenly, occasionally or poorly in others, owing to a lack of international cooperation assistance and technology transfer, to the extent possible.
- Information focused on disaster risk reduction is a much valued resource; its expanded availability, dissemination and use are widely considered an important accomplishment. Along with education more generally and capacity-building at all levels, knowledge management and the development of social capital should be viewed as priority investments in sustainability.

## **B. Gaps and challenges**

101. In addition to a lack of systematic implementation, cooperation and reporting of progress to reduce risk and vulnerability to disasters, contributors to the Yokohama Review process have identified the following gaps and challenges. They are presented as keys that may provide greater protection from disaster risks to people where they live and work. They may also provide an impetus to engage officials, institutions and the public in creating greater resilience to threats posed by disasters in the future.

### **102. Governance: organizational, legal and policy frameworks**

1. Ensuring an established disaster reduction strategy that is linked to individual sectoral interests and integrated into national and local development planning and objectives.

2. Establishing or strengthening national platforms for disaster reduction, comprising actors from multiple sectors and sustained by sufficient resources to make progress, in addition to the recognition of the political will and practical action needed to support disaster risk reduction.

3. Ensuring that roles, responsibilities, opportunities and resources for the development of risk reduction strategies are based on partnerships, are grounded in local community interests and encourage wide public participation, including the engagement of disadvantaged people.

4. Judiciously allocating resources from emergency and development budgets, internationally, regionally and within countries, to enhance disaster risk reduction strategies in practice.

5. Advancing the use of commonly understood terminology for disaster reduction and using flexible policy frameworks that allow for a variety of implementation approaches.

### **103. Risk identification, assessment, monitoring and early warning**

1. Establishing standards for the systematic collection and archiving of comprehensive national statistical records pertaining to the many related aspects of disaster risk reduction (including data related to built environments, lifelines and critical

infrastructure; socio-economic aspects of vulnerability; and for hazard analysis and disaster operational requirements).

2. Evaluating country-wide assessments of risk status (including hazard maps and vulnerability trends) and conducting risk assessments, incorporating technical and socio-economic dimensions; with analysis extended, where suited, to territorial or adjacent locations of shared exposure to disaster risks.

3. Building early warning systems that are centred on people at risk and that integrate the essential dimensions of risk assessment, warning generation, dissemination, preparedness and response capabilities.

4. Implementing the programmatic recommendations of the Second International Conference on Early Warning as endorsed by the General Assembly; particularly through the expansion of international coordination and the integration of early warning into development policy.

#### **104. Knowledge management and education**

1. Introducing disaster reduction subject matter into curricula at all levels of education and professional training, focusing on schools and other highly valued institutions.

2. Developing and supporting institutional capabilities for the collection, consolidation, and wide dissemination and use of current and traditional disaster reduction information and experience.

3. Emphasizing the benefits of experience through wider circulation and use of case-studies, professional exchanges between countries, and institutionalized efforts to identify and incorporate lessons learned from prior events.

4. Pursuing research agendas that bring together multiple disciplines and professional interests, feeding into decision-making processes and leading to the implementation of disaster reduction at all levels.

5. Formulating multifaceted and continuous public awareness strategies for advancing and advocating policies, capacity development and public understanding; involving professional, public and private resources and abilities, including those of the media, in the process.

#### **105. Reducing underlying risk factors**

1. Relating risk reduction to environmental, natural resources, climate, and similarly related geophysical areas of interest, abilities and commitments.

2. Joining social and economic development principles and practices with technical abilities to protect crucial infrastructure and reduce conditions of poverty for vulnerable populations.

3. Developing or involving the wider collaboration of public and private interests, scientific and professional abilities, and related partnerships both within and beyond specific areas of sectoral concentration, including the encouragement of wider knowledge exchange and technology transfer among all countries.

4. Enhancing the availability and appropriate use of technical measures of land-use planning, building and construction codes, and advanced technological skills and techniques by particularly disadvantaged and disaster-prone countries.

5. Identifying and encouraging local adoption of financial and related investment instruments to share, transfer or minimize risk exposure, particularly among the most vulnerable populations and within local communities.

**106. Preparedness for effective response and recovery**

1. Expanding public dialogue, official practice and professional involvement related to the entire range of shared and complementary disaster and risk management needs and responsibilities.

2. Identifying and allocating existing resources from the establishment, development and emergency budgets for disaster and risk management to greater effect in the realization of sustained risk reduction.

3. Evaluating the current suitability of all disaster and risk management policies, operational abilities and needs against present and emerging risks.

107. The Yokohama Review conclusions recognize that awareness and expressions of the importance of disaster risk reduction are illustrated by numerous individual examples and efforts. Many decision makers also know what is to be done, in some cases with resources already at their disposal. However, all stakeholders need to do much more to put their intentions into actions, if people around the world are indeed to become safer from disasters.

## Annex

# Evolutionary development of the Principles of Yokohama Strategy into a renewed policy framework for disaster reduction

| <i>Yokohama principles</i>   | <i>Policy framework – Thematic areas (based on good practices and implementation options for the future)</i>   |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Principle 3.</b> Disaster risk reduction integral aspects of development policy and planning at national, regional, bilateral, multilateral and international levels.</p>                            | <p><b>Governance: Institutional and policy frameworks for risk reduction</b></p>   |
| <p><b>Principle 6.</b> Participation at all levels, from the local community through the national government to the regional and international level is crucial for effective disaster risk reduction.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Socio-economic policies, effective utilization of resources</li> <li>• Environmental policies</li> <li>• Risk reduction and sustainable development</li> <li>• National policies, institutional development and legislation</li> <li>• Local authorities and municipal policies for risk reduction</li> <li>• Partnerships, community action and participation</li> <li>• Transparency and accountability</li> <li>• Science and technology policies</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Principle 10.</b> Each country bears the primary responsibility for protecting its people, and national assets from the impact of natural disasters.</p>   | <p><b>Risk identification, assessment monitoring and early warning</b></p>   |
| <p><b>Principle 1.</b> Risk assessment is a required step for adoption of disaster risk reduction policies and measures.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hazard and vulnerability assessments</li> <li>• Data-collection and information use</li> <li>• Disaster impact assessments</li> <li>• Forecasting and early warning</li> <li>• Climate and environmental risk assessment</li> <li>• Urban risk</li> <li>• Drought</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Principle 5.</b> Early warnings and their effective dissemination using telecommunications and broadcast services, are key to successful disaster risk reduction.</p>                                |  |
| <p><b>Principle 6.</b> Participation at all levels, from the local community through the national government to the regional and international level is crucial for effective disaster risk reduction.</p> |  |

*Yokohama principles**Policy framework – Thematic areas (based on good practices and implementation options for the future)*

**Principle 4.** Development and strengthening of capacities for disaster risk reduction is a top priority area.

**Principle 6.** Participation at all levels, from the local community through the national government to the regional and international level is crucial for effective disaster risk reduction.

**Principle 7.** Education and training of entire communities is crucial for the design and application of proper development patterns that reduce vulnerability of targeted groups.

**Principle 8.** The international community needs to share the necessary technology for disaster risk reduction as an integral part of technical cooperation.

**Principle 9.** Environmental protection as a component of sustainable development consistent with poverty alleviation is imperative for disaster risk reduction.

**Principle 2.** Disaster risk reduction of primary importance in reducing the need for disaster relief.

**Principle 8.** The international community needs to share the necessary technology for disaster risk reduction as an integral part of technical cooperation.

**Principle 10.** The international community should demonstrate strong political determination to mobilize adequate and make efficient use of existing financial, scientific and technological resources for disaster risk reduction, bearing in mind the needs of developing countries, particularly least developed countries.

**Knowledge management and education**

- Information management
- Education for sustainable development
- Disaster risk reduction at university level
- Training
- Research agendas
- Public awareness-raising tools

**Reduce underlying risk factors**

- Land use planning
- Environment, natural resources management
- Financial instruments; insurance, micro-finance – safety nets
- Safer construction, infrastructure protection
- Advanced technologies

**Preparedness for effective response and recovery**

- Relief with vulnerability reduction approach

**Implementation Mechanisms:**

- Regional institutional frameworks for risk reduction
- International cooperation policy for risk reduction (bilateral and multilateral)
- Partnerships, community action and participation





## Substantive outcomes of the Conference

*Abstract of the Report of the Conference*  
(A/CONF.206/6)

Resolution 1 : Hyogo Declaration

Resolution 2: Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015:  
Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to  
Disasters

# World Conference on Disaster Reduction

18-22 January 2005, Kobe, Hyogo, Japan



## **World Conference on Disaster Reduction**

**18-22 January 2005, Kobe, Hyogo, Japan**

### **Hyogo Declaration**

We, delegates to the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, have gathered from 18 to 22 January 2005 in Kobe City of Japan's Hyogo Prefecture, which has demonstrated a remarkable recovery from the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake of 17 January 1995.

We express our sincere condolences and sympathy to, and solidarity with, the people and communities adversely affected by disasters, particularly those devastated by the unprecedented earthquake and tsunami disaster in the Indian Ocean on 26 December 2004. We commend the efforts made by them, their Governments and the international community to respond to and overcome this tragedy. In response to the Special Leaders' Meeting of the Association of South-East Asian Nations on the Aftermath of Earthquake and Tsunami, held in Jakarta on 6 January 2005, we commit ourselves to assisting them, including with respect to appropriate measures pertinent to disaster reduction. We also believe that lessons learned from this disaster are relevant to other regions. In this connection, a special session on the recent earthquake and tsunami disaster, convened at the World Conference to review that disaster from a risk reduction perspective, delivered the Common Statement of the Special Session on Indian Ocean Disaster: Risk Reduction for a Safer Future as its outcome.

We recognize that the international community has accumulated much experience with disaster risk reduction through the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction and the succeeding International Strategy for Disaster Reduction. In particular, by taking concrete measures in line with the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World, we have learned much, including about gaps and challenges since the 1994 Yokohama Conference. Nevertheless, we are deeply concerned that communities continue to experience excessive losses of precious human lives and valuable property as well as serious injuries and major displacements due to various disasters worldwide.

We are convinced that disasters seriously undermine the results of development investments in a very short time, and therefore, remain a major impediment to sustainable development and poverty eradication. We are also cognizant that development investments that fail to appropriately consider disaster risks could increase vulnerability. Coping with and reducing disasters so as to enable and strengthen nations' sustainable development is, therefore, one of the most critical challenges facing the international community.

We are determined to reduce disaster losses of lives and other social, economic and environmental assets worldwide, mindful of the importance of international cooperation, solidarity and partnership, as well as good governance at all levels. We reaffirm the vital role of the United Nations system in disaster risk reduction.

Thus, we declare the following:

1. We will build upon relevant international commitments and frameworks, as well as internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, to strengthen global disaster reduction activities for the twenty-first century. Disasters have a tremendous detrimental impact on efforts at all levels to eradicate global poverty; the impact of disasters remains a significant challenge to sustainable development.

2. We recognize the intrinsic relationship between disaster reduction, sustainable development and poverty eradication, among others, and the importance of involving all stakeholders, including governments, regional and international organizations and financial institutions, civil society, including non-governmental organizations and volunteers, the private sector and the scientific community. We therefore welcome all the relevant events that took place and contributions made in the course of the Conference and its preparatory process.

3. We recognize as well that a culture of disaster prevention and resilience, and associated pre-disaster strategies, which are sound investments, must be fostered at all levels, ranging from the individual to the international levels. Human societies have to live with the risk of hazards posed by nature. However, we are far from powerless to prepare for and mitigate the impact of disasters. We can and must alleviate the suffering from hazards by reducing the vulnerability of societies. We can and must further build the resilience of nations and communities to disasters through people-centered early warning systems, risks assessments, education and other proactive, integrated, multi-hazard, and multi-sectoral approaches and activities in the context of the disaster reduction cycle, which consists of prevention, preparedness, and emergency response, as well as recovery and rehabilitation. Disaster risks, hazards, and their impacts pose a threat, but appropriate response to these can and should lead to actions to reduce risks and vulnerabilities in the future.

4. We affirm that States have the primary responsibility to protect the people and property on their territory from hazards, and thus, it is vital to give high priority to disaster risk reduction in national policy, consistent with their capacities and the resources available to them. We concur that strengthening community level capacities to reduce disaster risk at the local level is especially needed, considering that appropriate disaster reduction measures at that level enable the communities and individuals to reduce significantly their vulnerability to hazards. Disasters remain a major threat to the survival, dignity, livelihood and security of peoples and communities, in particular the poor. Therefore there is an urgent need to enhance the capacity of disaster-prone developing countries in particular, the least developed countries and small island developing States, to reduce the impact of disasters, through strengthened national efforts and enhanced bilateral, regional and international cooperation, including through technical and financial assistance.

5. We, therefore, adopt, the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters with its expected outcome, strategic goals, and priorities for action, as well as implementation strategies and associated follow-up, as a guiding framework for the next decade on disaster reduction.

6. We believe that it is critically important that the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters be translated into concrete actions at all levels and that achievements are followed up through the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, in order to reduce disaster risks and

vulnerabilities. We also recognize the need to develop indicators to track progress on disaster risk reduction activities as appropriate to particular circumstances and capacities as part of the effort to realize the expected outcome and strategic goals set in the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters. We underscore the importance of strengthening cooperative and synergistic interactions among various stakeholders and promoting voluntary partnerships for disaster reduction. We also resolve to further develop information sharing mechanisms on programmes, initiatives, best practices, lessons learnt and technologies in support of disaster risk reduction so that the international community can share the results of and benefits from these efforts.

7. We now call for action from all stakeholders, seeking the contributions of those with relevant specific competences and experiences, aware that the realization of the outcomes of the World Conference depends on our unceasing and tireless collective efforts, and a strong political will, as well as a shared responsibility and investment, to make the world safer from the risk of disasters within the next decade for the benefit of the present and future generations.

8. We express our most profound appreciation to the Government and people of Japan for hosting the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, and thank particularly the people of Hyogo Prefecture for their hospitality.



## **World Conference on Disaster Reduction**

18-22 January 2005, Kobe, Hyogo, Japan

### **Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters**

#### **I. Preamble**

1. The World Conference on Disaster Reduction was held from 18 to 22 January 2005 in Kobe, Hyogo, Japan, and adopted the present Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters (here after referred to as the “Framework for Action”). The Conference provided a unique opportunity to promote a strategic and systematic approach to reducing vulnerabilities<sup>1</sup> and risks to hazards.<sup>2</sup> It underscored the need for and identified ways of building the resilience of nations and communities to disasters<sup>3</sup>

#### **A. Challenges posed by disasters**

2. Disaster loss is on the rise with grave consequences for the survival, dignity and livelihood of individuals, particularly the poor, and hard-won development gains. Disaster risk is increasingly of global concern and its impact and actions in one region can have an impact on risks in another, and vice versa. This, compounded by increasing vulnerabilities related to changing demographic, technological and socio-economic conditions, unplanned urbanization, development within high-risk zones, under-development, environmental degradation, climate variability, climate change, geological hazards, competition for scarce resources, and the impact of epidemics such as HIV/AIDS, points to a future where disasters could increasingly threaten the world’s economy, and its population and the

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<sup>1</sup> Vulnerability is defined as: “The conditions determined by physical, social, economic, and environmental factors or processes, which increase the susceptibility of a community to the impact of hazards”. UN/ISDR. Geneva 2004.

<sup>2</sup> Hazard is defined as: “A potentially damaging physical event, phenomenon or human activity that may cause the loss of life or injury, property damage, social and economic disruption or environmental degradation. Hazards can include latent conditions that may represent future threats and can have different origins: natural (geological, hydrometeorological and biological) or induced by human processes (environmental degradation and technological hazards)” UN/ISDR. Geneva 2004.

<sup>3</sup> The scope of this Framework for Action encompasses disasters caused by hazards of national origin and related environmental and technological hazards and risks. It thus reflects a holistic and multi-hazard approach to disaster risk management and the relationship, between them which can have a significant impact on social, economic, cultural and environmental systems, as stressed in the Yokohama Strategy (section I, part B, letter I, p. 8).

sustainable development of developing countries. In the past two decades, on average more than 200 million people have been affected every year by disasters.

3. Disaster risk arises when hazards interact with physical, social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities. Events of hydrometeorological origin constitute the large majority of disasters. Despite the growing understanding and acceptance of the importance of disaster risk reduction and increased disaster response capacities, disasters and in particular the management and reduction of risk continue to pose a global challenge.

4. There is now international acknowledgement that efforts to reduce disaster risks must be systematically integrated into policies, plans and programmes for sustainable development and poverty reduction, and supported through bilateral, regional and international cooperation, including partnerships. Sustainable development, poverty reduction, good governance and disaster risk reduction are mutually supportive objectives, and in order to meet the challenges ahead, accelerated efforts must be made to build the necessary capacities at the community and national levels to manage and reduce risk. Such an approach is to be recognized as an important element for the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration.

5. The importance of promoting disaster risk reduction efforts on the international and regional levels as well as the national and local levels has been recognized in the past few years in a number of key multilateral frameworks and declarations.<sup>4</sup>

## **B. The Yokohama Strategy: lessons learned and gaps identified**

6. The Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation and its Plan of Action (“Yokohama Strategy”), adopted in 1994, provides landmark guidance on reducing disaster risk and the impacts of disasters.

7. The review of progress made in implementing the Yokohama Strategy<sup>5</sup> identifies major challenges for the coming years in ensuring more systematic action to address disaster risks in the context of sustainable development and in building resilience through enhanced national and local capabilities to manage and reduce risk.

8. The review stresses the importance of disaster risk reduction being underpinned by a more pro-active approach to informing, motivating and involving people in all aspects of disaster risk reduction in their own local communities. It also highlights the scarcity of resources allocated specifically from development budgets for the realization of risk reduction objectives, either at the national or the regional level or through international cooperation and financial mechanisms, while noting the significant potential to better exploit existing resources and established practices for more effective disaster risk reduction.

9. Specific gaps and challenges are identified in the following five main areas:

- (a) Governance: organizational, legal and policy frameworks;
- (b) Risk identification, assessment, monitoring and early warning;
- (c) Knowledge management and education;

<sup>4</sup> Some of these frameworks and declarations are listed in the annex to this document.

<sup>5</sup> *Review of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World (A/CONF.206/L.1).*

- (d) Reducing underlying risk factors;
- (e) Preparedness for effective response and recovery.

These are the key areas for developing a relevant framework for action for the decade 2005–2015.

## **II. World Conference on Disaster Reduction: objectives, expected outcome and strategic goals**

### **A. Objectives**

10. The World Conference on Disaster Reduction was convened by decision of the General Assembly, with five specific objectives:<sup>6</sup>

- (a) To conclude and report on the review of the Yokohama Strategy and its Plan of Action, with a view to updating the guiding framework on disaster reduction for the twenty-first century;
- (b) To identify specific activities aimed at ensuring the implementation of relevant provisions of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development on vulnerability, risk assessment and disaster management;
- (c) To share good practices and lessons learned to further disaster reduction within the context of attaining sustainable development, and to identify gaps and challenges;
- (d) To increase awareness of the importance of disaster reduction policies, thereby facilitating and promoting the implementation of those policies;
- (e) To increase the reliability and availability of appropriate disaster-related information to the public and disaster management agencies in all regions, as set out in relevant provisions of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

### **B. Expected outcome**

11. Taking these objectives into account, and drawing on the conclusions of the review of the Yokohama Strategy, States and other actors participating at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction (hereinafter referred to as “the Conference”) resolve to pursue the following expected outcome for the next 10 years:

The substantial reduction of disaster losses, in lives and in the social, economic and environmental assets of communities and countries.

The realization of this outcome will require the full commitment and involvement of all actors concerned, including governments, regional and international organizations, civil society including volunteers, the private sector and the scientific community.

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<sup>6</sup> As per General Assembly resolution 58/214 of 23 December 2003.



## C. Strategic goals

12. To attain this expected outcome, the Conference resolves to adopt the following strategic goals:

(a) The more effective integration of disaster risk considerations into sustainable development policies, planning and programming at all levels, with a special emphasis on disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness and vulnerability reduction;

(b) The development and strengthening of institutions, mechanisms and capacities at all levels, in particular at the community level, that can systematically contribute to building resilience<sup>7</sup> to hazards;

(c) The systematic incorporation of risk reduction approaches into the design and implementation of emergency preparedness, response and recovery programmes in the reconstruction of affected communities.

## III. Priorities for action 2005–2015

### A. General considerations

13. In determining appropriate action to achieve the expected outcome and strategic goals, the Conference reaffirms that the following general considerations will be taken into account:

(a) The Principles contained in the Yokohama Strategy retain their full relevance in the current context, which is characterized by increasing commitment to disaster reduction;

(b) Taking into account the importance of international cooperation and partnerships, each State has the primary responsibility for its own sustainable development and for taking effective measures to reduce disaster risk, including for the protection of people on its territory, infrastructure and other national assets from the impact of disasters. At the same time, in the context of increasing global interdependence, concerted international cooperation and an enabling international environment are required to stimulate and contribute to developing the knowledge, capacities and motivation needed for disaster risk reduction at all levels;

(c) An integrated, multi-hazard approach to disaster risk reduction should be factored into policies, planning and programming related to sustainable development, relief, rehabilitation, and recovery activities in post-disaster and post-conflict situations in disaster-prone countries<sup>8</sup>;

<sup>7</sup> Resilience: “The capacity of a system, community or society potentially exposed to hazards to adapt, by resisting or changing in order to reach and maintain an acceptable level of functioning and structure. This is determined by the degree to which the social system is capable of organising itself to increase this capacity for learning from past disasters for better future protection and to improve risk reduction measures.” UN/ISDR. Geneva 2004.

<sup>8</sup> The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002, paragraphs 37 and 65.

(d) A gender perspective should be integrated into all disaster risk management policies, plans and decision-making processes, including those related to risk assessment, early warning, information management, and education and training;<sup>9</sup>

(e) Cultural diversity, age, and vulnerable groups should be taken into account when planning for disaster risk reduction, as appropriate;

(f) Both communities and local authorities should be empowered to manage and reduce disaster risk by having access to the necessary information, resources and authority to implement actions for disaster risk reduction;

(g) Disaster-prone developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States, warrant particular attention in view of their higher vulnerability and risk levels, which often greatly exceed their capacity to respond to and recover from disasters;

(h) There is a need to enhance international and regional cooperation and assistance in the field of disaster risk reduction through, inter alia:

- The transfer of knowledge, technology and expertise to enhance capacity building for disaster risk reduction
- The sharing of research findings, lessons learned and best practices
- The compilation of information on disaster risk and impact for all scales of disasters in a way that can inform sustainable development and disaster risk reduction
- Appropriate support in order to enhance governance for disaster risk reduction, for awareness-raising initiatives and for capacity-development measures at all levels, in order to improve the disaster resilience of developing countries
- The full, speedy and effective implementation of the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative, taking into account the impact of disasters on the debt sustainability of countries eligible for this programme
- Financial assistance to reduce existing risks and to avoid the generation of new risks

(i) The promotion of a culture of prevention, including through the mobilization of adequate resources for disaster risk reduction, is an investment for the future with substantial returns. Risk assessment and early warning systems are essential investments that protect and save lives, property and livelihoods, contribute to the sustainability of development, and are far more cost-effective in strengthening coping mechanisms than is primary reliance on post-disaster response and recovery;

(j) There is also a need for proactive measures, bearing in mind that the phases of relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction following a disaster are windows of opportunity for the rebuilding of livelihoods and for the planning and reconstruction of physical and socio-economic structures, in a way that will build community resilience and reduce vulnerability to future disaster risks;

(k) Disaster risk reduction is a cross-cutting issue in the context of sustainable development and therefore an important element for the achievement of internationally

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<sup>9</sup> As reaffirmed at the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly on the topic “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”.

agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration. In addition, every effort should be made to use humanitarian assistance in such a way that risks and future vulnerabilities will be lessened as much as possible.

## **B. Priorities for action**

14. Drawing on the conclusions of the review of the Yokohama Strategy, and on the basis of deliberations at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction and especially the agreed expected outcome and strategic goals, the Conference has adopted the following five priorities for action:

1. Ensure that disaster risk reduction is a national and a local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation.
2. Identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning.
3. Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels.
4. Reduce the underlying risk factors.
5. Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels.

15. In their approach to disaster risk reduction, States, regional and international organizations and other actors concerned should take into consideration the key activities listed under each of these five priorities and should implement them, as appropriate, to their own circumstances and capacities.

### **1. Ensure that disaster risk reduction is a national and a local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation**

16. Countries that develop policy, legislative and institutional frameworks for disaster risk reduction and that are able to develop and track progress through specific and measurable indicators have greater capacity to manage risks and to achieve widespread consensus for, engagement in and compliance with disaster risk reduction measures across all sectors of society.

*Key activities:*

#### *(i) National institutional and legislative frameworks*

(a) Support the creation and strengthening of national integrated disaster risk reduction mechanisms, such as multi sectoral national platforms<sup>10</sup>, with designated responsibilities at the national through to the local levels to facilitate coordination across sectors. National platforms should also facilitate coordination across sectors, including by maintaining a broad based dialogue at national and regional levels for promoting awareness among the relevant sectors.

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<sup>10</sup> The establishment of national platforms for disaster reduction was requested in Economic and Social Council resolution 1999/63 and in General Assembly resolutions 56/195, 58/214, and 58/215. The expression “national platform” is a generic term used for national mechanisms for coordination and policy guidance on disaster risk reduction that need to be multi-sectoral and inter-disciplinary in nature, with public, private and civil society participation involving all concerned entities within a country (including United Nations agencies present at the national level, as appropriate). National platforms represent the national mechanism for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction.

(b) Integrate risk reduction, as appropriate, into development policies and planning at all levels of government, including in poverty reduction strategies and sectors and multi sector policies and plans.

(c) Adopt, or modify where necessary, legislation to support disaster risk reduction, including regulations and mechanisms that encourage compliance and that promote incentives for undertaking risk reduction and mitigation activities.

(d) Recognize the importance and specificity of local risk patterns and trends, decentralize responsibilities and resources for disaster risk reduction to relevant sub-national or local authorities, as appropriate.

(ii) *Resources*

(e) Assess existing human resource capacities for disaster risk reduction at all levels and develop capacity-building plans and programmes for meeting ongoing and future requirements.

(f) Allocate resources for the development and the implementation of disaster risk management policies, programmes, laws and regulations on disaster risk reduction in all relevant sectors and authorities at all levels of administrative and budgets on the basis of clearly prioritized actions.

(g) Governments should demonstrate the strong political determination required to promote and integrate disaster risk reduction into development programming.

(iii) *Community participation*

(h) Promote community participation in disaster risk reduction through the adoption of specific policies, the promotion of networking, the strategic management of volunteer resources, the attribution of roles and responsibilities, and the delegation and provision of the necessary authority and resources.

**2. Identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning**

17. The starting point for reducing disaster risk and for promoting a culture of disaster resilience lies in the knowledge of the hazards and the physical, social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities to disasters that most societies face, and of the ways in which hazards and vulnerabilities are changing in the short and long term, followed by action taken on the basis of that knowledge.

*Key activities:*

(i) *National and local risk assessments*

(a) Develop, update periodically and widely disseminate risk maps and related information to decision-makers, the general public and communities at risk<sup>11</sup> in an appropriate format

(b) Develop systems of indicators of disaster risk and vulnerability at national and sub-national scales that will enable decision-makers to assess the impact of disasters<sup>12</sup> on social, economic and environmental conditions and disseminate the results to decision-makers, the public and populations at risk.

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<sup>11</sup> See footnotes 1, 2 and 3 for the scope of this Framework for Action.

<sup>12</sup> See footnotes 1, 2 and 3.

(c) Record, analyse, summarize and disseminate statistical information on disaster occurrence, impacts and losses, on a regular bases through international, regional, national and local mechanisms.

(ii) *Early warning*

(d) Develop early warning systems that are people centered, in particular systems whose warnings are timely and understandable to those at risk, which take into account the demographic, gender, cultural and livelihood characteristics of the target audiences, including guidance on how to act upon warnings, and that support effective operations by disaster managers and other decision makers.

(e) Establish, periodically review, and maintain information systems as part of early warning systems with a view to ensuring that rapid and coordinated action is taken in cases of alert/emergency.

(f) Establish institutional capacities to ensure that early warning systems are well integrated into governmental policy and decision-making processes and emergency management systems at both the national and the local levels, and are subject to regular system testing and performance assessments.

(g) Implement the outcome of the Second International Conference on Early Warning held in Bonn, Germany, in 2003<sup>13</sup>, including through the strengthening of coordination and cooperation among all relevant sectors and actors in the early warning chain in order to achieve fully effective early warning systems.

(h) Implement the outcome of the Mauritius Strategy for the further implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the sustainable development of small island developing States, including by establishing and strengthening effective early warning systems as well as other mitigation and response measures.

(iii) *Capacity*

(i) Support the development and sustainability of the infrastructure and scientific, technological, technical and institutional capacities needed to research, observe, analyse, map and where possible forecast natural and related hazards, vulnerabilities and disaster impacts.

(j) Support the development and improvement of relevant databases and the promotion of full and open exchange and dissemination of data for assessment, monitoring and early warning purposes, as appropriate, at international, regional, national and local levels.

(k) Support the improvement of scientific and technical methods and capacities for risk assessment, monitoring and early warning, through research, partnerships, training and technical capacity- building. Promote the application of *in situ* and space-based earth observations, space technologies, remote sensing, geographic information systems, hazard modelling and prediction, weather and climate modelling and forecasting, communication tools and studies of the costs and benefits of risk assessment and early warning.

(l) Establish and strengthen the capacity to record, analyze, summarize, disseminate, and exchange statistical information and data on hazards mapping, disaster risks, impacts, and losses; support the development of common methodologies for risk assessment and monitoring.

<sup>13</sup> As recommended in General Assembly resolution 58/214.

(iv) *Regional and emerging risks*

(m) Compile and standardize, as appropriate, statistical information and data on regional disaster risks, impacts and losses.

(n) Cooperate regionally and internationally, as appropriate, to assess and monitor regional and trans-boundary hazards, and exchange information and provide early warnings through appropriate arrangements, such as, *inter alia*, those relating to the management of river basins.

(o) Research, analyse and report on long-term changes and emerging issues that might increase vulnerabilities and risks or the capacity of authorities and communities to respond to disasters.

**3. Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels**

18. Disasters can be substantially reduced if people are well informed and motivated towards a culture of disaster prevention and resilience, which in turn requires the collection, compilation and dissemination of relevant knowledge and information on hazards, vulnerabilities and capacities.

*Key activities:*

(i) *Information management and exchange*

(a) Provide easily understandable information on disaster risks and protection options, especially to citizens in high-risk areas, to encourage and enable people to take action to reduce risks and build resilience. The information should incorporate relevant traditional and indigenous knowledge and culture heritage and be tailored to different target audiences, taking into account cultural and social factors.

(b) Strengthen networks among disaster experts, managers and planners across sectors and between regions, and create or strengthen procedures for using available expertise when agencies and other important actors develop local risk reduction plans.

(c) Promote and improve dialogue and cooperation among scientific communities and practitioners working on disaster risk reduction, and encourage partnerships among stakeholders, including those working on the socioeconomic dimensions of disaster risk reduction.

(d) Promote the use, application and affordability of recent information, communication and space-based technologies and related services, as well as earth observations, to support disaster risk reduction, particularly for training and for the sharing and dissemination of information among different categories of users.

(e) In the medium term, develop local, national, regional and international user-friendly directories, inventories and national information-sharing systems and services for the exchange of information on good practices, cost-effective and easy-to-use disaster risk reduction technologies, and lessons learned on policies, plans and measures for disaster risk reduction.

(f) Institutions dealing with urban development should provide information to the public on disaster reduction options prior to constructions, land purchase or land sale.

(g) Update and widely disseminate international standard terminology related to disaster risk reduction, at least in all official United Nations languages, for use in programme and institutional development, operations, research, training curricula and public information programmes.

*(ii) Education and training*

(h) Promote the inclusion of disaster risk reduction knowledge in relevant sections of school curricula at all levels and the use of other formal and informal channels to reach youth and children with information; promote the integration of disaster risk reduction as an intrinsic element of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005–2015).

(i) Promote the implementation of local risk assessment and disaster preparedness programmes in schools and institutions of higher education.

(j) Promote the implementation of programmes and activities in schools for learning how to minimize the effects of hazards.

(k) Develop training and learning programmes in disaster risk reduction targeted at specific sectors (development planners, emergency managers, local government officials, etc.).

(l) Promote community-based training initiatives, considering the role of volunteers, as appropriate, to enhance local capacities to mitigate and cope with disasters.

(m) Ensure equal access to appropriate training and educational opportunities for women and vulnerable constituencies; promote gender and cultural sensitivity training as integral components of education and training for disaster risk reduction.

*(iii) Research*

(n) Develop improved methods for predictive multi-risk assessments and socioeconomic cost–benefit analysis of risk reduction actions at all levels; incorporate these methods into decision-making processes at regional, national and local levels.

(o) Strengthen the technical and scientific capacity to develop and apply methodologies, studies and models to assess vulnerabilities to and the impact of geological, weather, water and climate-related hazards, including the improvement of regional monitoring capacities and assessments.

*(iv) Public awareness*

(p) Promote the engagement of the media in order to stimulate a culture of disaster resilience and strong community involvement in sustained public education campaigns and public consultations at all levels of society.

**4. Reduce the underlying risk factors**

19. Disaster risks related to changing social, economic, environmental conditions and land use, and the impact of hazards associated with geological events, weather, water, climate variability and climate change, are addressed in sector development planning and programmes as well as in post-disaster situations.

*Key activities:**(i) Environmental and natural resource management*

(a) Encourage the sustainable use and management of ecosystems, including through better land-use planning and development activities to reduce risk and vulnerabilities.

(b) Implement integrated environmental and natural resource management approaches that incorporate disaster risk reduction, including structural and non-structural measures,<sup>14</sup> such as integrated flood management and appropriate management of fragile ecosystems.

(c) Promote the integration of risk reduction associated with existing climate variability and future climate change into strategies for the reduction of disaster risk and adaptation to climate change, which would include the clear identification of climate-related disaster risks, the design of specific risk reduction measures and an improved and routine use of climate risk information by planners, engineers and other decision-makers.

(ii) *Social and economic development practices*

(d) Promote food security as an important factor in ensuring the resilience of communities to hazards, particularly in areas prone to drought, flood, cyclones and other hazards that can weaken agriculture-based livelihoods.

(e) Integrate disaster risk reduction planning into the health sector; promote the goal of “hospitals safe from disaster” by ensuring that all new hospitals are built with a level of resilience that strengthens their capacity to remain functional in disaster situations and implement mitigation measures to reinforce existing health facilities, particularly those providing primary health care.

(f) Protect and strengthen critical public facilities and physical infrastructure, particularly schools, clinics, hospitals, water and power plants, communications and transport lifelines, disaster warning and management centres, and culturally important lands and structures through proper design, retrofitting and re-building, in order to render them adequately resilient to hazards.

(g) Strengthen the implementation of social safety-net mechanisms to assist the poor, the elderly and the disabled, and other populations affected by disasters. Enhance recovery schemes including psycho-social training programmes in order to mitigate the psychological damage of vulnerable populations, particularly children, in the aftermath of disasters.

(h) Incorporate disaster risk reduction measures into post-disaster recovery and rehabilitation processes<sup>15</sup> and use opportunities during the recovery phase to develop capacities that reduce disaster risk in the long term, including through the sharing of expertise, knowledge and lessons learned.

(i) Endeavour to ensure, as appropriate, that programmes for displaced persons do not increase risk and vulnerability to hazards.

(j) Promote diversified income options for populations in high-risk areas to reduce their vulnerability to hazards, and ensure that their income and assets are not undermined by development policy and processes that increase their vulnerability to disasters.

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<sup>14</sup> “Structural measures refer to any physical construction to reduce or avoid possible impacts of hazards, which include engineering measures and construction of hazard-resistant and protective structures and infrastructure. Non-structural measures refer to policies, awareness, knowledge development, public commitment, and methods and operating practices, including participatory mechanisms and the provision of information, which can reduce risk and related impacts”, UN/ISDR Geneva, 2004.

<sup>15</sup> According to the principles contained in General Assembly resolution 46/182.



(k) Promote the development of financial risk-sharing mechanisms, particularly insurance and reinsurance against disasters.

(l) Promote the establishment of public–private partnerships to better engage the private sector in disaster risk reduction activities; encourage the private sector to foster a culture of disaster prevention, putting greater emphasis on, and allocating resources to, pre-disaster activities such as risk assessments and early warning systems.

(m) Develop and promote alternative and innovative financial instruments for addressing disaster risk.

(iii) *Land-use planning and other technical measures*

(n) Incorporate disaster risk assessments into the urban planning and management of disaster-prone human settlements, in particular highly populated areas and quickly urbanizing settlements. The issues of informal or non-permanent housing and the location of housing in high-risk areas should be addressed as priorities, including in the framework of urban poverty reduction and slum-upgrading programmes.

(o) Mainstream disaster risk considerations into planning procedures for major infrastructure projects, including the criteria for design, approval and implementation of such projects and considerations based on social, economic and environmental impact assessments.

(p) Develop, upgrade and encourage the use of guidelines and monitoring tools for the reduction of disaster risk in the context of land-use policy and planning.

(q) Incorporate disaster risk assessment into rural development planning and management, in particular with regard to mountain and coastal flood plain areas, including through the identification of land zones that are available and safe for human settlement.

(r) Encourage the revision of existing or the development of new building codes, standards, rehabilitation and reconstruction practices at the national or local levels, as appropriate, with the aim of making them more applicable in the local context, particularly in informal and marginal human settlements, and reinforce the capacity to implement, monitor and enforce such codes, through a consensus-based approach, with a view to fostering disaster-resistant structures.

## 5. Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels

20. At times of disaster, impacts and losses can be substantially reduced if authorities, individuals and communities in hazard-prone areas are well prepared and ready to act and are equipped with the knowledge and capacities for effective disaster management.

*Key activities:*

(a) Strengthen policy, technical and institutional capacities in regional, national and local disaster management, including those related to technology, training, and human and material resources.

(b) Promote and support dialogue, exchange of information and coordination among early warning, disaster risk reduction, disaster response, development and other relevant agencies and institutions at all levels, with the aim of fostering a holistic approach towards disaster risk reduction.

(c) Strengthen and when necessary develop coordinated regional approaches, and create or upgrade regional policies, operational mechanisms, plans and communication systems to prepare for and ensure rapid and effective disaster response in situations that exceed national coping capacities.

(d) Prepare or review and periodically update disaster preparedness and contingency plans and policies at all levels, with a particular focus on the most vulnerable areas and groups. Promote regular disaster preparedness exercises, including evacuation drills, with a view to ensuring rapid and effective disaster response and access to essential food and non-food relief supplies, as appropriate, to local needs.

(e) Promote the establishment of emergency funds, where and as appropriate, to support response, recovery and preparedness measures.

(f) Develop specific mechanisms to engage the active participation and ownership of relevant stakeholders, including communities, in disaster risk reduction, in particular building on the spirit of volunteerism.

## **IV. Implementation and follow-up**

### **A. General considerations**

21. The implementation of and follow-up to the strategic goals and priorities for action set out in this Framework for Action should be addressed by different stakeholders in a multi-sectoral approach, including the development sector. States and regional and international organizations, including the United Nations and international financial institutions, are called upon to integrate disaster risk reduction considerations into their sustainable development policy, planning and programming at all levels. Civil society, including volunteers and community-based organizations, the scientific community and the private sector are vital stakeholders in supporting the implementation of disaster risk reduction at all levels.

22. While each State has primary responsibility for its own economic and social development, an enabling international environment is vital to stimulate and contribute to developing the knowledge, capacities and motivation needed to build disaster resilient nations and communities. States and regional and international organizations should foster greater strategic coordination among the United Nations, other international organizations, including international financial institutions, regional bodies, donor agencies and non-governmental organizations engaged in disaster risk reduction, based on a strengthened International Strategy for Disaster Reduction. In the coming years, consideration should be given to ensuring the implementation and strengthening of relevant international legal instruments related to disaster risk reduction.

23. States and regional and international organizations should also support the capacities of regional mechanisms and organizations to develop regional plans, policies and common practices, as appropriate, in support of networking advocacy, coordination, exchange of information and experience, scientific monitoring of hazards and vulnerability, and institutional capacity development and to deal with disaster risks.

24. All actors are encouraged to build multi-stakeholder partnerships, at all levels, as appropriate, and on a voluntary basis, to contribute to the implementation of this Framework for Action. States and other actors are also encouraged to promote the strengthening or establishment of national, regional and international volunteer corps, which can be made available to countries and to the international community to contribute to addressing vulnerability and reducing disaster risk.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> In compliance with General Assembly resolution 58/118 and OAS General Assembly resolution 2018 (xxxiv-0/04).

25. The Mauritius Strategy for the further implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for Small Island Developing States underscores that small island developing States are located among the most vulnerable regions in the world in relation to the intensity and frequency of natural and environmental disasters and their increasing impact, and face disproportionately high economic, social and environmental consequences. Small island developing States have undertaken to strengthen their respective national frameworks for more effective disaster management and are committed, with the necessary support of the international community, to improve national disaster mitigation, preparedness and early-warning capacity, increase public awareness about disaster reduction, stimulate interdisciplinary and inter-sectoral partnerships, mainstream risk management into their national planning process, address issues relating to insurance and reinsurance arrangements, and augment their capacity to predict and respond to emergency situations, including those affecting human settlements stemming from natural and environmental disasters.

26. In view of the particular vulnerabilities and insufficient capacities of least developed countries to respond to and recover from disasters, support is needed by the least developed countries as a matter of priority, in executing substantive programmes and relevant institutional mechanisms for the implementation of the Framework for Action, including through financial and technical assistance for and capacity building in disaster risk reduction as an effective and sustainable means to prevent and respond to disasters.

27. Disasters in Africa pose a major obstacle to the African continent's efforts to achieve sustainable development, especially in view of the region's insufficient capacities to predict, monitor, deal with and mitigate disasters. Reducing the vulnerability of the African people to hazards is a necessary element of poverty reduction strategies, including efforts to protect past development gains. Financial and technical assistance is needed to strengthen the capacities of African countries, including observation and early warning systems, assessments, prevention, preparedness, response and recovery.

28. The follow-up on the World Conference on Disaster Reduction will, as appropriate, be an integrated and coordinated part of the follow-up to other major conference in fields relevant to disaster risk reduction.<sup>17</sup> This should include specific reference to progress on disaster risk reduction taking, into account agreed development goals, including those found in the Millennium Declaration.

29. The implementation of this Framework for Action for the period 2005-2015 will be appropriately reviewed.

## **B. States**

30. All States should endeavour to undertake the following tasks at the national and local levels, with a strong sense of ownership and in collaboration with civil society and other stakeholders, within the bounds of their financial, human and material capacities, and taking into account their domestic legal requirements and existing international instruments related to disaster risk reduction. States should also contribute actively in the context of regional and international cooperation, in line with paragraphs 33 and 34.

(a) Prepare and publish national baseline assessments of the status of disaster risk reduction, according to the capabilities, needs and policies of each State, and, as appropriate, share this information with concerned regional and international bodies;

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<sup>17</sup> As identified in General Assembly resolution 57/270 B.

(b) Designate an appropriate national coordination mechanism for the implementation and follow up of this Framework for Action, and communicate the information to the secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction;

(c) Publish and periodically update a summary of national programmes for disaster risk reduction related to this Framework for Action, including on international cooperation;

(d) Develop procedures for reviewing national progress against this Framework for Action, which should include systems for cost benefit analysis and ongoing monitoring and assessment of vulnerability and risk, in particular with regards to regions exposed to hydrometeorological and seismic hazards, as appropriate;

(e) Include information on progress of disaster risk reduction in the reporting mechanisms of existing international and other frameworks concerning sustainable development, as appropriate;

(f) Consider, as appropriate, acceding to, approving or ratifying relevant international legal instruments relating to disaster reduction, and, for State parties to those instruments, take measures for their effective implementation;<sup>18</sup>

(g) Promote the integration of risk reduction associated with existing climate variability and future climate change into strategies for the reduction of disaster risk and adaptation to climate change; ensure that the management of risks associated with geological hazards, such as earthquakes and landslides, are fully taken into account in disaster risk reduction programmes.

### **C. Regional organizations and institutions**

31. Regional organizations with a role related to disaster risk reduction are called upon to undertake the following tasks within their mandates, priorities and resources:

(a) Promote regional programmes, including programmes for technical cooperation, capacity development, the development of methodologies and standards for hazard and vulnerability monitoring and assessment, the sharing of information and effective mobilization of resources, in view of supporting national and regional efforts to achieve the objectives of this Framework for Action;

(b) Undertake and publish regional and sub-regional baseline assessments of the disaster risk reduction status, according to the needs identified and in line with their mandates;

(c) Coordinate and publish periodic reviews on progress in the region and on impediments and support needs, and assist countries, as requested, in the preparation of periodic national summaries of their programmes and progress;

(d) Establish or strengthen existing specialized regional collaborative centers, as appropriate, to undertake research, training, education and capacity building in the field of disaster risk reduction;

(e) Support the development of regional mechanisms and capacities for early warning to disasters, including for tsunami.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Such as the Tampere Convention on the Provision of Telecommunication Resources for Disaster Mitigation and Relief Operations (1998), which entered into force 8 January 2005.

<sup>19</sup> The United Nations Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation established by the Secretary-General

## D. International organizations

32. International organizations, including organizations of the United Nations system and international financial institutions, are called upon to undertake the following tasks within their mandates, priorities and resources:

(a) Engage fully in supporting and implementing the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, and cooperate to advance integrated approaches to building disaster-resilient nations and communities, by encouraging stronger linkages, coherence and integration of disaster risk reduction elements into the humanitarian and sustainable development fields as set out in this Framework for Action;

(b) Strengthen the overall capacity of the United Nations system to assist disaster-prone developing countries in disaster risk reduction through appropriate means and coordination and define and implement appropriate measures for regular assessment of their progress towards the achievement of the goals and priorities set out in this Framework for Action, building on the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction;

(c) Identify relevant actions to assist disaster-prone developing countries in the implementation of this Framework for Action; ensure that relevant actions are integrated, as appropriate, into each organization's own scientific, humanitarian and development sectors, policies, programmes and practices and that adequate funding is allocated for their implementation;

(d) Assist disaster-prone developing countries to set up national strategies and plans of action and programmes for disaster risk reduction and to develop their institutional and technical capacities in the field of disaster risk reduction, as identified through the priorities in this Framework for Action;

(e) Integrate actions in support of the implementation of this Framework into relevant coordination mechanisms such as the United Nations Development Group and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (on humanitarian action), including at the national level and through the Resident Coordinator system and the United Nations Country teams. In addition, integrate disaster risk reduction considerations into development assistance frameworks, such as the Common Country Assessments, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and poverty reduction strategies;

(f) In close collaboration with existing networks and platforms, cooperate to support globally consistent data collection and forecasting on natural hazards, vulnerabilities and risks and disaster impacts at all scales. These initiatives should include the development of standards, the maintenance of databases, the development of indicators and indices, support to early warning systems, the full and open exchange of data and the use of *in situ* and remotely sensed observations;

(g) Support States with the provision of appropriate, timely and well coordinated international relief assistance, upon request of affected countries, and in accordance with agreed guiding principles for emergency relief assistance and coordination arrangements.<sup>20</sup> Provide this assistance with a view to reducing risk and vulnerability, improving capacities and ensuring effective arrangements for international cooperation for urban search and rescue assistance.<sup>21</sup> Ensure that arrangements for prompt international response to reach

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made an urgent appeal to halve loss of human life caused by major water related disasters, including tsunami, by 2015.

<sup>20</sup> Defined by General Assembly resolution 46/182.

<sup>21</sup> Work towards the consistent implementation of General Assembly resolution 57/150.

affected areas are being developed at national and local levels and that appropriate linkages to recovery efforts and risk reduction are strengthened;

(h) Strengthen the international mechanisms with a view to supporting disaster stricken States in the transition phase towards sustainable physical, social and economic recovery and to reducing future risks. This should include support for risk reduction activities in post-disaster recovery and rehabilitation processes and sharing of good practices, knowledge and technical support with relevant countries, experts and United Nations organizations;

(i) Strengthen and adapt the existing inter-agency disaster management training programme based on a shared, inter-agency strategic vision and framework for disaster risk management that encompasses risk reduction, preparedness, response and recovery.

## **E. The International Strategy for Disaster Reduction**

33. The partners in the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, in particular, the Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction and its members, in collaboration with relevant national, regional, international and United Nations bodies and supported by the inter-agency secretariat for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, are requested to assist in implementing this Framework for Action as follows, subject to the decisions taken upon completion of the review process<sup>22</sup> of the current mechanism and institutional arrangements:

(a) Develop a matrix of roles and initiatives in support of follow-up to this Framework for Action, involving individual members of the Task Force and other international partners;

(b) Facilitate the coordination of effective and integrated action within the organizations of the United Nations system and among other relevant international and regional entities, in accordance with their respective mandates, to support the implementation of this Framework for Action, identify gaps in implementation and facilitate consultative processes to develop guidelines and policy tools for each priority area, with relevant national, regional and international expertise;

(c) Consult with relevant United Nations agencies and organizations, regional and multilateral organizations and technical and scientific institutions, as well as interested States and civil society, with the view to developing generic, realistic and measurable indicators, keeping in mind available resources of individual States. These indicators could assist States to assess their progress in the implementation of the Framework of Action. The indicators should be in conformity with the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration;

Once that first stage has been completed, States are encouraged to develop or refine indicators at the national level reflecting their individual disaster risk reduction priorities, drawing upon the generic indicators.

(d) Ensure support to national platforms for disaster reduction, including through the clear articulation of their role and value added, as well as regional coordination, to support the different advocacy and policy needs and priorities set out in this Framework for

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<sup>22</sup> A review process regarding the institutional arrangements within the United Nations pertaining to disaster reduction is currently being carried out and will be completed, following the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, with an evaluation of the role and performance of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction.

Action, through coordinated regional facilities for disaster reduction, building on regional programmes and outreach advisors from relevant partners;

(e) Coordinate with the secretariat of the Commission on Sustainable Development to ensure that relevant partnerships contributing to implementation of the Framework for Action are registered in its sustainable development partnership database;

(f) Stimulate the exchange, compilation, analysis, summary and dissemination of best practices, lessons learned, available technologies and programmes, to support disaster risk reduction in its capacity as an international information clearinghouse; maintain a global information platform on disaster risk reduction and a web-based register “portfolio” of disaster risk reduction programmes and initiatives implemented by States and through regional and international partnerships;<sup>23</sup>

(g) Prepare periodic reviews on progress towards achieving the objectives and priorities of this Framework for Action, within the context of the process of integrated and coordinated follow-up and implementation of United Nations conferences and summits as mandated by the General Assembly,<sup>24</sup> and provide reports and summaries to the Assembly and other United Nations bodies, as requested or as appropriate, based on information from national platforms, regional and international organizations and other stakeholders, including on the follow-up to the implementation of the recommendations from the Second International Conference on Early Warning (2003).<sup>25</sup>

## F. Resource mobilization

34. States, within the bounds of their financial capabilities, regional and international organizations, through appropriate multilateral, regional and bilateral coordination mechanisms, should undertake the following tasks to mobilize the necessary resources to support implementation of this Framework for Action:

(a) Mobilize the appropriate resources and capabilities of relevant national, regional and international bodies, including the United Nations system;

(b) Provide for and support, through bilateral and multilateral channels, the implementation of this Framework for Action in disaster-prone developing countries, including through financial and technical assistance, addressing debt sustainability, technology transfer on mutually agreed terms, and public-private partnerships, and encourage North-South and South-South cooperation;

(c) Mainstream disaster risk reduction measures appropriately into multilateral and bilateral development assistance programmes including those related to poverty reduction, natural resource management, urban development and adaptation to climate change;

<sup>23</sup> To serve as a tool for sharing experience and methodologies on disaster reduction efforts. States and relevant organizations are invited to actively contribute to the knowledge-building process by registering their own effort on a voluntary basis in consideration of the global progress of the Conference outcomes.

<sup>24</sup> General Assembly resolution 57/270B, follow-up to United Nations conferences, and the General Assembly resolutions on Implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, which request the Secretary-General to report to the second committee of the General Assembly under “Sustainable development” (54/219, 56/195, 57/256 58/214, 58/215, 59/231).

<sup>25</sup> General Assembly resolution 58/214.

(d) Provide adequate voluntary financial contributions to the United Nations Trust Fund for Disaster Reduction, in the effort to ensure the adequate support for the follow-up activities to this Framework for Action. Review the current usage and feasibility for the expansion of this fund, *inter alia*, to assist disaster-prone developing countries to set up national strategies for disaster risk reduction.

(e) Develop partnerships to implement schemes that spread out risks, reduce insurance premiums, expand insurance coverage and thereby increase financing for post-disaster reconstruction and rehabilitation, including through public and private partnerships, as appropriate. Promote an environment that encourages a culture of insurance in developing countries, as appropriate.



## Annex

### Some multilateral developments related to disaster risk reduction

**Among the multi-lateral frameworks and declarations that are of relevance to this document there are the following:<sup>26</sup>**

- The International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States,<sup>27</sup> held in Mauritius in January 2005, calls for increased commitments to reducing the vulnerability of small island developing States, due to their limited capacity to respond to and recover from disasters.
- The Agenda for Humanitarian Action adopted by the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in December 2003 includes a goal and actions to “reduce the risk and impact of disasters and improve preparedness and response mechanisms”.
- The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development,<sup>28</sup> held in 2002, paragraph 37 requests actions under the chapeau: “An integrated, multi-hazard, inclusive approach to address vulnerability, risk, assessment and disaster management, including prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery, is an essential element of a safer world in the 21st century”, supporting the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction as the first action. The theme of “vulnerability, risk reduction and disaster management” is included in the multi-year programme of work of the Commission on Sustainable Development in 2014-2015, and as a cross-cutting theme throughout the programme.
- The third Action Programme for Least Developed Countries,<sup>29</sup> adopted in 2001, requests action by development partners in view of giving priority attention to these countries in the substantive programme and institutional arrangements for the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction.
- The Millennium Declaration<sup>30</sup> of September 2000, identified key objectives of “Protecting the vulnerable” and “Protecting our common environment”, which resolve to “intensify cooperation to reduce the number and effects of natural and man-made disasters”. A comprehensive review of the progress made in the

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<sup>26</sup> For a more comprehensive listing of relevant frameworks and declarations, see information document: Extracts Relevant to Disaster Risk Reduction From International Policy Initiatives 1994-2003, Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction, ninth meeting 4-5 May 2004.

<sup>27</sup> General Assembly resolution 58/213. Further implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

<sup>28</sup> A/CONF.199/20.

<sup>29</sup> A/CONF.191/11.

<sup>30</sup> General Assembly resolution 55/2.

fulfillment of all the commitments contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration will be held in July 2005.<sup>31</sup>

- The International Strategy for Disaster Reduction was launched in 2000<sup>32</sup> by the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly as an inter-agency framework and mechanism (inter-agency task force on disaster reduction and an inter-agency secretariat) to serve as a focal point within the United Nations system with the mandate to promote public awareness and commitment, expand networks and partnerships, and improve knowledge about disaster causes and options for risk reduction, building on the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action and as follow-up to the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction.
- The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development,<sup>33</sup> held in 2002, requested the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to “improve techniques and methodologies for assessing the effects of climate change, and encourage the continuing assessment of those adverse effects...”. In addition, the General Assembly<sup>34</sup> has encouraged the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,<sup>35</sup> and the parties to its Kyoto Protocol<sup>36</sup> (entering into force in February 2005) to continue to address the adverse effects of climate change, especially in those developing countries that are particularly vulnerable. The United Nations General Assembly<sup>37</sup> also encouraged the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to continue to assess the adverse effects of climate change on the socio-economic and natural disaster reduction systems of developing countries.
- The Tampere Convention on the Provision of Telecommunication Resources for Disaster Mitigation and Relief Operations of 1998 entered into force on 8 January 2005.
- The Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation and its Plan of Action<sup>38</sup> (1994), was adopted at the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction, building on the mid-term review of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction.
- The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa,<sup>39</sup> was adopted in 1994 and entered into force in 1996. The United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity<sup>40</sup> was adopted in 1992 and entered into force in 1993.

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<sup>31</sup> General Assembly resolution 58/291.

<sup>32</sup> General Assembly resolution 58/291.

<sup>33</sup> A/CONF.199/20, paragraph 37 e).

<sup>34</sup> General Assembly resolutions on natural disasters and vulnerability (59/233, and 58/215).

<sup>35</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.

<sup>36</sup> FCCC/CP/1997/7/Add.1, decision 1/CP.3, annex.

<sup>37</sup> General Assembly resolutions on natural disasters and vulnerability (59/233, and 58/215).

<sup>38</sup> A/CONF.172/9.

<sup>39</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1954, No. 33480.

<sup>40</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1760, No. 30619.

- The General Assembly<sup>41</sup> (1991) requested strengthening of the coordination of emergency and humanitarian assistance of the United Nations, in both complex emergencies natural disasters. It recalled the International Framework of Action for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (resolution 44/236, 1989), and set out guiding principles for humanitarian relief, preparedness, prevention and on the continuum from relief to rehabilitation and development.

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<sup>41</sup> General Assembly resolution 46/182.



The Thematic Segment of  
the World Conference on  
Disaster Reduction:  
a summary

### Introduction

The thematic segment of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction was organized to complement the discussions of the policy outcome in the intergovernmental segment, with the intention

- to exchange experiences and good practices in order to enhance the implementation of the programme outcome of the Conference;
- to identify issues requiring further discussion at international, regional, national, and community levels;
- to launch specific initiatives or partnerships to support the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction; and
- to facilitate networking and exchange of information between collaborating partners and organizations.

The Thematic Segment was composed of several different programme elements, each of which is reviewed below. In each case, rather than summarizing all that was presented and is available in original text on the ISDR website, attention will be drawn to the major subjects discussed or examples used with a potential for advancing the realization and practical measures to implement the Hyogo Framework for Action. The thematic segment of the WCDR was composed of three High Level Round Tables and five clusters of themes including five Thematic Panels, 46 Thematic Sessions grouped under each of the clusters, as well as one special technical session devoted to the Indian Ocean Tsunami, and five Regional Sessions.

### Key or Recurrent Issues from the Thematic Segment

Recurring themes emerged throughout the various thematic discussions. The most common and nearly universal expression was the necessity to mainstream disaster risk reduction into sustainable development practices. This underlined the importance of linking the related targets envisioned for disaster reduction to those of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). While the importance of these methodological associations was widely mentioned to motivate and provide a basis for monitoring accomplishments, few explicit actions were conveyed or proposals made for achieving these outcomes.

Thematic panels emphasized the need for specific and measurable targets related to accomplishment and the identification of associated means, resources and commitments for disaster reduction. Issues of scale in disaster risk management were prominent in the consideration given to different needs at various levels of both responsibilities and activities (e.g. global, regional, national, sub-national and local). The perceptions, and relative adoption of goals and targets will have different demands, but also can demonstrate the significant impact on the successful application of disaster risk reduction at these various levels.

Presenters frequently noted the beneficial values of partnerships and various forms of extended operational relationships. Depending on the specific subject matter under discussion, such partnerships were variously characterized as representing interdisciplinary, multisectoral, cross-cutting, public-private characteristics or other forms of multiple interests for greater synergy. Despite variations and frequent references to the challenges in forging and maintaining effective collaboration among different organizations

**The Hyogo Framework of Action calls for the IATF/DR to discuss and develop a set of benchmarks and indicators for the priority areas of the Framework.**

*It should "Consult with relevant United Nations agencies and organizations, regional and multilateral organizations and technical and scientific institutions, as well as interested States and civil society, with the view to developing generic, realistic and measurable indicators, keeping in mind available resources of individual States. These indicators could assist States to assess their progress in the implementation of the Framework of Action. The indicators should be in conformity with the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration."*

HFA, Para. 33

with their respective core interests, many project initiatives were mentioned to demonstrate the richness of shared endeavours. Some of them will be referred to in this report.

Depending on the individual subjects under discussion or the primary type of experience of the speakers, there was a welcome recognition of the functional complementarities between emergency preparedness and disaster reduction responsibilities. This was frequently accompanied by an open expression of the growing potential for more shared information applications, training, risk assessment, and public involvement, especially at the more local levels of activity. Similarly, expanded opportunities were noted for linking the experiences of disaster response to future risk reduction strategic planning. The promising circumstances for building risk awareness and reduction measures into disaster recovery processes were also seized. The relevance of these very points was made forcefully by the damage assessments and recovery planning that were being conducted in the worst tsunami-affected areas at the time of the WCDR.

The need for education and capacity building in various forms was referred to frequently throughout the many thematic discussions of the Conference. The use of information systems and the development of capabilities and measures to benefit from shared experience were widely encouraged, with the dual but related objectives of creating greater public awareness and increasing policy comprehension about hazards and disaster risk management.

In these cases, the use of information was emphasized with the primary intention of converting existing knowledge or conceptual understanding into the practical realization of accomplishment "on the ground", especially at the more localized levels of risk exposure. Detailed presentations in many of the Thematic Sessions demonstrated feasibility and effective practices in selected countries.

## Civil Society Perspectives of Thematic Issues

Since the completion of the World Conference, some commentators from civil society have expressed views related to the thematic segment that deserve continuing attention<sup>1</sup>. Particular emphasis continues to be given within civil society and especially among socially-engaged academics and NGO community interests on the need for "all stakeholders" to proceed beyond formally negotiated statements and to realize tangible means of reducing vulnerability and sparing people, particularly within local communities, from disaster losses.

For a number of the voices of civil society, concern remained that the sensitivities routinely expressed through thematic subject presentations and experience failed to gain adequate influence beyond the expression of carefully negotiated outcome document statements. These, one commentator noted, conveyed more of a 'framework of vision' rather than a 'framework for action'.

While there was widespread acknowledgement of a much closer association of disaster reduction within the context of sustainable development, there is continuing disappointment that more explicit commitments to stated targets and specified resource allocations remain bound by political considerations and non-specific encouragement.

Coming so soon after the Indian Ocean tsunami, a number of civil society commentators felt that a chance had been missed at this 'milestone event' that placed disaster risk reduction at the centre of national, regional and global political agendas amongst so many participants by its failing to make "the strongest possible commitments". An operational hunger remains to remove institutional barriers so as to translate the evident knowledge abundantly displayed in thematic segment discussions into strategies and programmes for sustainable development and poverty reduction.

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<sup>1</sup> See particularly the Civil Society Address to the WCDR, delivered by Ms. Zenaida Delica on behalf of civil society organizations to the closing plenary session of the WCDR, 22 January 2005; The New Kobe Consensus: A proactive look at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction by Dr. Ben Wisner and Dr. Peter Walker; and "Comments on the World Conference on Disaster Reduction" contained in the International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters, Vol. 23, No. 1. March 2005.

## World Conference on Disaster Reduction

18-22 January 2005, Kobe, Hyogo, Japan

This necessarily casts a much wider frame of reference, which unfortunately both underscores the desirability of widespread interest and participation in the subject at the very same time that it risks diluting the relative importance for individual areas of commitment. Elements critical for sustainable development such as poverty reduction, addressing the consequences of climate change, and even pursuing resolution of the mutual consequences of conflict and disasters invite attention to "root causes of disaster vulnerability"; at the same time the nature of disaster risks themselves can become blurred. This dichotomy was most regularly expressed in calls for mainstreaming disaster reduction and seeking cross-sectoral involvement. Yet, there is also considerable encouragement that more practices be built around 'people-centred' efforts characterized by participation, dialogue and localized relevance which reflect more focused and specific concentrations of interest.

A near universal disappointment amongst civil society views was the avoidance of designating explicit targets for accomplishment, even as such measures were conveyed in various forms of project experience. Despite suggested targets and many possible supporting indicators (albeit of varied suitability) being proposed in each of the Thematic Cluster background papers, and referred to as essential in many of the presentations, their acceptance in practice remains only as a promise of further dialogue. Without more concrete advances on the basic methods or indicators to track, measure or monitor accomplishments - at national, regional or international levels of activity - neither expectations of 'firm commitments' nor the establishment of 'reporting procedures' appear likely to stimulate tangible results.

Many specific recommendations borne of experience can be reviewed in the full documentation of the Thematic Segment presentations. Pertinent viewpoints emanating from civil society with additional recommendations elaborated can be reviewed in those resources given in footnote 2. A robust exchange of views on the subject during the preparatory process for the WCDR can be seen at the "International Students Discussion of the WCDR" on the Environmental Issues Forum of Oberlin College accessible at: <http://www.unisdr.org/wcdr/preparatory-process/inputs.htm>

## Review of Thematic Sessions

### High Level Round Tables

All three High Level Round Table discussions addressed disaster risk in the context of international significance to current and future development practices and planning. Introductory panels were organized around overarching themes for future direction that would benefit from greater political commitment, media visibility and high-level participation. The subject matter of each one was derived from areas identified by the Review of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action, and considered further through the conference preparatory process.

The round tables were conducted as open discussions among representatives of Governments and partners from organizations, built around key challenges and emerging issues of global disaster risk reduction. Eminent keynote speakers opened each round table and a panel discussion followed by high-level representatives of Governments, United Nations and other international organizations, community leaders and renowned technical specialists.

There was a measure of cross-cutting interest evident in all of the round tables, resulting in some issues gaining additional emphasis by their repetition in different settings. The deep shock at the extensive losses of the recent tsunami in the Indian Ocean exerted immediacy and had a significant impact on all of the round table discussions. The consequences of the tsunami demonstrated more convincingly than any speech ever could the need for more serious commitment to preparedness capabilities throughout the world. Speakers repeatedly made demands for the urgent implementation of multi-hazard, globally coordinated but locally relevant early warning systems. However, it was equally noted that in all cases the operation of effective early warning systems had to be based on individual country capabilities linked through common policies and consensually agreed procedures.



This in turn stimulated the frequent expression of needs for better and more relevant information, education and capacity building being fundamental to the effective implementation for all preparedness and warning systems. Many speakers focussed their remarks particularly on the importance of investing in human capital through education and training, without which the achievement of any viable risk reduction goals would be problematic.

The urgent need for setting targets and indicators for disaster risk reduction with a clear focus on local communities comprised a dominant theme in the round tables. Speakers expressed the value of encouraging the development and progressive use of appropriate means to express and monitor expected results in disaster reduction. Efforts are required to expand the global dialogue and within individual countries in order to provide a measurable basis for both accomplishment and accountability.

To underline the relationships between disasters and development, and for the beneficial effects of disaster reduction on national development strategies, there was a strong recognition of the need to associate any proposed disaster reduction targets and related indicators to the Millennium Development Goals' (MDGs), and the reporting processes concerned.

Speakers and members of the audience made frequent references to the need for more statistically explicit and clearly designated commitment of resources for countries to undertake sustained and strategic approaches to disaster reduction. There was widespread recognition that such demonstrated commitment was a matter of necessity both within countries and among the international development and technical assistance communities.

These shared expectations for better tracking of accomplishments as well as the more sustained commitment of resources for risk reduction over a significant period of time would require better cooperation and more examples of joint efforts among governments, international organizations, financial institutions, NGOs and local communities.

Highlights of the individual round tables include:

### **1. Disaster Risk: The Next Development Challenge**

A growing number and more far-reaching disasters threaten sustainable development. Development practices and investments need to take a more systematic account of the risk of natural and related hazards. Heads of development programmes and financial institutions, as well as government officials representing both national and local authorities provided their views on how to meet this challenge.

Their comments suggested that disaster reduction has yet to gain wide influence in strategic national objectives or in receiving sustained commitment on the political agenda. Without concerted efforts across the several sectors involved, disaster risk reduction easily becomes overshadowed by other pressing demands with national ramifications such as conflict resolution, poverty reduction or environmental protection. These limitations were noted even as the individual panellists of numerous sessions emphasised that disaster risks are likely to be exacerbated in the context of climate change and that more risk reduction considerations are essential to respond to this emergent challenge.

Implementation gaps remain in many locations and circumstances between the expression of the ideals that support disaster risk reduction and the realization of actual policies. Accomplishments are impeded further by the fact that the multi-sectoral, multidisciplinary, multi-level as well as the multi-stakeholder nature of disaster risk reduction is not always so clearly understood or fully represented within the various sectoral policies most concerned with the different dimensions of risk.

The international community was called upon to strengthen the current approach to disaster risk reduction within the United Nations' system and to organise a more explicit recognition and a consolidated approach to disaster risk identification and management practices being 'mainstreamed' into all relevant sectors.

### **2. Learning to Live with Risk**

Education, professional training, and the exchange of information together compose a powerful force to reduce disaster risk. Heads of key international organizations, leading scholars and government officials discussed what is required, at the start of the UN Decade on Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014), to expand educational and training opportunities to develop a broad culture of prevention within societies. Designated by the UN General Assembly as the lead agency for its promotion, UNESCO has a key role to play in ensuring that the Decade provides important impetus to further education and awareness globally in disaster risk reduction.

The second round table clearly established that sharing experiences and other forms of learning are crucial to advancing disaster risk reduction. There are three connected dimensions crucial for understanding future risks: the scientific and technological aspects, the environmental contexts, and the educational needs. It was emphasised that sustainable development cannot occur without a concerted focus being placed on education about natural disaster reduction. Knowledge about, and training in natural hazards must increase and contribute to the wider understanding and transmission of sustainable development, as well as the essential supporting social and cultural values.

Within countries multiple aspects of education need to be considered, ranging from the inclusion of disaster and risk-related subject matter in the curricula of formal education at all levels, through specialized and technical training related to disaster and risk management. Research and public awareness programmes equally depend on the exchange of experience, case studies and the lessons learned from previous disasters. All of these measures that develop capacities and in time provide institutional basis for sustained knowledge about hazards and risks depend on systematic efforts to collect and disseminate information among many different professional interests, official responsibilities and public concerns.

A primary target group for disaster risk reduction education and training should be women and children, addressing also the important role of gender. Throughout the round table discussion, prominence also was given to the importance of active participation and a community-based focus on risk education in schools and within local communities. Lessons from the 1995 Great Hanshin Earthquake in Japan show that it is important to transfer the knowledge and experiences gained by the present generation to future generations to promote a culture and climate for disaster risk reduction. The role and the importance of harnessing traditional knowledge for disaster reduction were also emphasized.

### **3. Emerging Risks: What Will Tomorrow Hold?**

Climate change, deforestation, rapid urbanization, and spreading diseases are among the many examples of emerging trends that demonstrate the growing consequences of disaster risks. Heads of United Nations agencies and leading experts presented observations about these risks that have far-reaching implications for decision makers. The growing concerns about a wider range of related issues underlines the importance of a comprehensive approach being adopted within all countries if disaster risks are to be reduced on a global scale. Such awareness is even more vital for developing countries, and especially small island States, land-locked and other particularly vulnerable countries such as Least Developed Countries (LDCs) which are likely to be disproportionately affected by these, as well as other natural disasters.

Greater regard for the hazards that affect cities and the urban risks associated with them is essential. While cities of all sizes hold the potential for economic growth and social development, they also create new dimensions of risk. Urban risks need to be considered in terms of urban poverty and unchecked urbanisation, urban settlement patterns and land use, the serious implementation and enforcement of building codes and regulations. The unplanned development and encroachment of cities on peri-urban areas and the resulting impact on the environment and critical natural resources were noted and recognized as rapidly growing challenges for understanding urban risks. Rising concerns about climate change and its possible impact on cities were also noted for increased attention in the future.

While local authorities are often noted as the most important sphere of government for actually implementing disaster risk reduction policies, they are often the most neglected. Local capacities in disaster risk reduction need to be strengthened through enabling national policy, financial and technical support with development funding specifically aimed at identifying, assessing and working to reduce disaster risks. In this case, the South African Disaster Management Law of 2002 presents an excellent example of motivation by requiring each of the country's 52 municipal authorities to designate a specific planned expenditure line in their annual operating budgets to address hazard and risk reduction at local levels of activity.

Planning practices at sub-national, and particularly local levels of responsibility also need to strive for greater transparency and accountability by advancing more efforts to involve civil society and the public in the essential dialogue that forms the basis of successful local risk reduction strategies. Innovative financing mechanisms for local government have not yet been so widely pursued and can be explored more vigorously through either international or regional mechanisms in addition to individual country's own resource allocations. In this respect, there are strong motivational as well as practical values in sharing good practices from wider international experience and among countries or communities themselves.

### Thematic Clusters

Throughout the WCDR, parallel thematic meetings were organized around technical and specialized operational experience in accordance with the Framework for Disaster Reduction that provided the basic structure for the WCDR. These broad subject areas were clustered under five themes previously identified as priority areas of work for the next ten years through the Review of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action as well as through consultations with members of the Inter-Agency task Force for Disaster Reduction (IATF/DR) and other ISDR partners involved in organizing each of the Thematic Clusters. The Clusters and the primary organizational partners for each were:

1. Governance: institutional and policy frameworks for risk reduction  
UNDP/BCPR, UN-HABITAT, UNV, ProVention Consortium Secretariat
2. Risk identification, assessment, monitoring and early warning  
WMO, UNU, EC/JRC
3. Knowledge, innovation and education: Building a culture of safety and resilience  
UNESCO, UNICEF, IFRC
4. Reducing the underlying risk factors  
UNEP, UNCRD, WHO
5. Preparedness for effective response  
UN-OCHA, WFP

A Background Paper was prepared for each Cluster by the coordinating partners in conjunction with the ISDR secretariat to draw upon the accomplishments and conclusions regarding gaps and remaining challenges of the Yokohama Review. The papers highlighted areas for further dialogue and provided emphasis for discussion under the five clusters. Primary issues in each cluster were presented in five summarizing Thematic Panels, with a senior government representative chairing each one. Panellists gave particular attention to the benefits of their experience through programme initiatives, networking and partnerships as well as elaborating on selected activities. This structure thereby set the stage in each of the broad subject areas to inform and reinforce a basis for implementing a future framework of action to advance disaster risk reduction in 2005-2015.

These largely policy-oriented surveys were supplemented by additional technical Thematic Sessions, organized around specific topics within each of the five clusters. They were conducted in a manner to introduce practical examples of disaster risk reduction activities by the initiators and practitioners themselves, and to provide opportunities for wide professional exchange through questions, comment, descriptive materials and often animated dialogue among the participants extending beyond the formal closure of the sessions.

The well-attended and often enthusiastic Thematic Sessions provided a rich elaboration and a very productive exchange of practical information across various professional disciplines and among different sectoral interests. While it was expected that such emphasis could provide the benefits of experience to elaborate the various policy deliberations of the intergovernmental segment leading to the Hyogo Framework for Action, the more evident result actually was seen to be numerous energetic cross-sectoral discussions and the initiation of productive networking and multi-organizational exchange focused on implementation practices.

Major subjects of interest from each of the Thematic Clusters, drawn from all the panels and some of their related technical sessions are reviewed briefly below. Each is introduced by the corresponding title line adopted from the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA), which can be referred to for an elaboration of the associated actions envisaged to realize accomplishments in the coming years of 2005-2015. In addition to the Report of the Conference (A/CONF.206/6) containing the Hyogo Declaration and the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters, the five Background Papers, composition details and summaries of all Cluster Panels, summaries of all Thematic Sessions and the notes or résumés of nearly all the technical presentations are available on the ISDR website, <http://www.unisdr.org/wcdr/>.

### **1. Ensure that disaster risk reduction is a national and a local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation**

*Countries that develop policy, legislative and institutional frameworks for disaster risk reduction and that are able to develop and track progress through specific and measurable indicators have greater capacity to manage risks and to achieve widespread consensus for, engagement in and compliance with disaster risk reduction measures across all sectors of society.*  
HFA, Para. 16

**The Cluster Panel stressed** the importance of good governance being the prerequisite for effective disaster reduction. Governance was basic to the findings of the Yokohama Review and remains a significant component of disaster reduction programming if economic and social development is to be sustained. The Panel stressed the importance of participation by all stakeholders in planning, decisions and actions to reduce disaster risks. Legal and regulatory frameworks are needed to ensure that governments have the authority to act. Additional comments by participants also noted that the planning and accomplishment of disaster risk reduction initiatives cannot be considered strictly as managerial matters; they should not lose sight of the wider principles of social justice, equity and rights that underpin good governance.

Equally, the establishment of national and regional platforms to promote disaster reduction is central to ensure multi-stakeholder, multi-sectoral and multi-level approaches. Platforms need the commitment of governments, strong leadership and guaranteed resources. Advocacy is important to ensuring that disaster reduction remains high on government agendas, particularly when it is competing with so many other priorities. It is the poor and excluded that are often the most vulnerable to disaster risks.

If institutions and policy frameworks do not reflect the requirements and actively engage those who are most vulnerable, then effectiveness will be diminished. Governance for disaster reduction should promote community resilience, in part by reflecting specific factors that contribute to good governance. As an outgrowth of good governance, volunteerism was cited as an important contributor in creating community engagement and therefore improved resilience. Mainstreaming disaster reduction also means working at the local level. As disasters affect many individual communities, disaster reduction needs to be decentralised as much as possible, and involve all stakeholders at the locations of most immediate exposure to disaster risks.

Additional comments from participants indicated the need for financial resource allocations. Particular attention is necessary to ensure that allocations are most effective when aimed at local levels of engagement, while at the same time not neglecting other aspects of implementation. This equally implies a responsibility for sectoral institutions as well as regional interests to refocus their resources to reflect the importance of addressing 'cross-cutting' or

multidisciplinary requirements in effective disaster reduction. Regionally based platforms of implementation such as the Earthquake and Megacities Initiative illustrate the beneficial outcomes of collective and interdisciplinary horizontal coordination of functions, that can also encourage more individual efforts and local level involvement.

#### Key issues highlighted

- Governmental responsibility ('Good Governance') is essential to ensure the success of disaster risk reduction, generally encouraged by legal and regulatory frameworks or incentive mechanisms suited to the needs of a society.
- Political commitment for disaster risk reduction is linked to both consistent advocacy and the allocation of clearly defined resources and related investment arrangements.
- The horizontal as well as vertical integration of disaster risk reduction issues at regional, national and sub-national levels can be conveyed effectively through established platforms and institutionalised arrangements.
- The need to share international experiences and knowledge in good governance for disaster reduction, complemented by efforts to increase public participation and the involvement of all stakeholders at all levels, but especially in local communities.
- Partnerships are essential, as those between
  - Governments and civil society (public and private sectors)
  - National and local authorities (officials and vulnerable communities)
  - Sectors and stakeholders (technical/academic and practitioners)
  - Multilateral and bilateral institutions and countries (Donor interests and governments)

Technical sessions provided both examples and details of all these principles.

By recognizing the impact of disasters on development and a growing need to integrate disaster risk issues into development planning, International Financial Institutions have proceeded to increase their knowledge and involvement in natural risk reduction and their own development activities. There is a growing record of initiatives, such as those undertaken by the Inter-American Development Bank to assist their clients in managing hazard risks through the provision of loans, policy advice, technical assistance and knowledge sharing services. A basic approach is built around individual country strategy developed through dialogue in creating client-driven initiatives with both medium and long objectives.

Global and national case examples were cited illustrating key factors and conditions for success in promoting, setting up, monitoring and sustaining national institutions and systematic approaches for risk reduction. The primary lesson of experience for shifting policy orientation away from only response oriented considerations towards risk awareness and management is the creation of combined legislative, regulatory and policy frameworks to guide the process over a sustained period of time that can transcend any individual government programme or sectoral interests. All the examples reflected the engagement of a wide range of professional contributors drawn from governance, the private commercial sector, the scientific community, media, civil society, and local community leadership, amongst others.

Key foundation elements include a stable political environment that embodies and advocates an explicit national disaster strategy characterized by multi-hazard and multi-stakeholder approaches, most frequently built on a variety of partnerships. The purposeful use of information dissemination and risk assessment data has proved to be crucial to motivating dialogue, enabling decentralized and distributed responsibilities, and monitoring progress over an extended time period with explicit planning perspectives.

The accountability of government authorities in tangibly reducing disaster risks is a growing expectation, given the increasing social and economic costs of disasters as well as the wider public recognition of preventable losses. Sadly, these latter expressions of often-angry insights tend to occur only after a disaster seriously damages a community. A case study from Bangladesh presented by the NGO Action Aid, illustrated how a greater degree of citizen action could lead to improvements in policy as well as the practical aspects of protection, here in the case of flood embankment maintenance and management. Key policy recommendations for advancing public involvement and more transparent governance for disaster reduction include the elements of public participation, official accountability, decentralization in authority and practice, widespread and free access to information, legally

enforceable obligations and standards, access to justice, national cooperation and coordination, and international support and collaboration.

Several technical sessions convincingly displayed the many opportunities within a society by which risk issues can, and indeed should, be motivated by the particular interests of key sectors in the course of fulfilling basic responsibilities in the protection of individual and collective social, economic and environmental assets. This underlines the importance of efforts to protect critical infrastructure and facilities such as those related to public health, education, transportation and communications, 'lifeline' public services and utilities, and essential means of production or livelihoods.

Even more fundamentally, emphasis was given to the pressing importance of addressing disaster risk through more robust commitments to climate change adaptation. Similarly, there is a growing need and many unmet challenges to address the root causes of vulnerability in human settlements of mega-cities, where the concentration of assets as well as huge influxes of people are themselves creating new severe conditions of vulnerability and disaster risk.

A concluding observation emphasized that successful installation of disaster reduction strategies within a society requires the inclusion of the subject within a larger societal context with attendant expected public values and accepted norms of responsible governance and public behaviour. This is commonly referred to as developing a "culture of prevention". Importantly this must extend beyond the interests of only specific disaster authorities and become 'mainstreamed' into multiple dimensions of a society on a continuous basis. It is an indisputable fact that the most important work for successful disaster reduction must be accomplished in advance, on a continuous basis in the intervals between threats and impending crises - precisely at the time when there is too often complacency and scant regard for potential, and even probable, risks.

## 2. Identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning

*The starting point for reducing disaster risk and for promoting a culture of disaster resilience lies in the knowledge of the hazards and the physical, social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities to disasters that most societies face, and of the ways in which hazards and vulnerabilities are changing in the short and long term, followed by action taken on the basis of that knowledge.*

HFA, Para. 17

The core elements discussed by the Cluster Panel stressed that risk is dynamic and therefore risk management needs to be a continuous process. Examples demonstrated that the nature of risk changes over time stemming from multiple hazards that continuously evolve from the processes of social, economic, institutional and environmental change. Efforts to manage or reduce risk likewise require multiple approaches to address a variety of changing conditions of vulnerability within an array of local, national, regional and global factors that create variable conditions of people's exposure to risk.

From this common starting point, panellists highlighted a number of insights from practical experience in their respective areas of responsibility. In each case they presented different aspects of risk assessment and related warning processes, but with a shared intention of moving from deliberation and analysis of risk to the implementation of practices that can enable action in reducing people's immediate exposure to disaster risks. The experience of Jamaica's prior preparedness planning grounded in local community awareness, coupled with both the technical specialist monitoring and official early warning of approaching hurricanes during the course of 2004 demonstrated how well coordinated activities can be successful in saving people's lives and minimising losses.

The role of a well-understood and comprehensively conceived policy was cited as being crucial to provide a guiding framework for practical activities and also to serve as a means of ensuring continuity of approaches. As also addressed in the Cluster on Governance and Policy Frameworks, the need for the integration of risk awareness and management across professional disciplines, sectors and national boundaries was repeated, but with added attention

directed particularly towards the anticipation of preparedness and warning functions. It is clear that a need remains for global standards to be agreed and implemented for basic warning and preparedness capabilities.

Issues related to the quantification of vulnerability and corresponding adaptive capacities were presented with particular regard to the needs and current limitations experienced with the availability and interpretation of socio-economic data. Very often it comes down to using the window of opportunity after a disaster event when national decision-makers or regional and international organizations are more likely to provide resources for risk assessment and early warning, as was dramatically seen in the case of the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster.

The mobilization of people as well as resources in local communities through risk awareness, assessment and warning was highlighted as being crucial in responding to crises, although the challenges of maintaining such capabilities when disaster events are infrequent were equally noted. However, by recognizing the important role that community-based data collection can play in monitoring risk and vulnerability can provide a basis for sustained involvement as well as continuing community education about evolving threats. This also provides a focal point to address the challenges that often exist in integrating locally generated data into national information management systems.

#### Key issues highlighted

- Risk identification and assessment, effective 'people-centred' or 'actionable' early warning systems, and local preparedness and response capabilities necessarily must be associated with each other and cannot be viewed as distinct or unrelated functions.
- Climatic and other physical science data are frequently available (at least at central or national levels), but socio-economic data necessary to assess relative degrees of vulnerability and therefore to evaluate risk are often absent, especially at local levels of exposure.
- Baseline data is frequently not available, or the coherent and systematic use of existing data for risk assessment can be very problematic. There are often difficulties in integrating both physical and social data, and there are often impediments in the consistent use of related information in risk awareness or assessment at national and local levels of need.
- Community-based means of information collection and dissemination, even if accomplished with low or moderate levels of technology, can represent very significant contributions to effective and locally relevant early warning systems.
- Any early warning information needs to be complemented with the development and use of local information regarding both hazard awareness and necessary response capabilities in such subjects as evacuation, infrastructure and community level education.

Technical sessions provided both examples and details of all these principles.

Case examples included specific technical discussions of risk assessment and early warning practices and how they are related to drought, flood and severe weather hazards. Regardless of the individual hazards involved, presentations stressed the necessity of hazard identification, monitoring, assessment and warning capabilities all being integrated within comprehensive disaster risk management strategies. These capabilities form the basis of any holistic and systematic strategy for disaster and risk management so they cannot be viewed in isolation as singular responsibilities.

To be effective, these functions must establish and maintain a local focus of attention both in terms of assessing impacts and in shaping the nature of communications. Community-based dialogue and participation in hazard and risk assessment becomes an important motivating mechanism as demonstrated for example by 'community watching' programmes pursued in Japan. It is equally important to recognize that specialist and technical abilities are required in the identification and monitoring of hazards as much as in taking account of the social issues involved in successful public awareness and the effective communication of warnings.

Understanding the patterns, trends and indicators of vulnerability and risks can provide the insight required by decision-makers and also enable a wider public involvement to lessen the potential for disasters. A variety of disaster risk indices and related indicators are in the process of being developed by consortia of technical specialists and

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academic analysts working together with official authorities and government policy-makers. Such systematic analyses based on case studies of disaster risk are being pursued through multidisciplinary scientific activities of the global "Hotspots" project, as well as being part of the programmes of the intergovernmental Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development, among others.

All risk analysis and warning capabilities are fully dependent on the systematic and reliable availability of data. The use and dissemination of information derived from the technical analysis of risk is equally dependent on the successful communication of that knowledge. A number of challenges related to data and information usage remain in both areas. There are many limitations in the systematic maintenance and consolidation of data, especially at national levels, but in the absence of commonly agreed standards, also at the international level of compilation and analysis. There are also difficulties in the determination and utility of different risk indicators critical for analysis, and unresolved problems in communicating more effectively with specific targeted users.

Disaster and risk management institutions have not yet sufficiently addressed the various scales or magnitudes of application in both time and space that determine each of these problematic elements. The abundance of information that is now available creates its own problems in the absence of means to sort or relate specific data to meet individual needs, or to be scaled for a particular level of application.

A number of these issues are combined in the context of effective early warning systems whereby technical, political, communications, and social factors all play critical roles. There is increasing attention now being given to 'people-centred' warning systems, often expressed in terms of getting the warnings 'the final kilometre' down to where people are actually exposed to the immediate threat. These related processes could only occur in time and with the necessary materials and capabilities for people to act if the severe consequences are to be avoided. This requires both official understanding in shaping policy and the use of public awareness techniques that can both inform and motivate people to action.

It also depends on a combination of 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' sensitivities and communications within individual countries and between countries and regional/sub-regional and international levels of specialist monitoring and reporting of hazards. To be meaningful though, ultimately warning practices must become embedded within local communities through the combined processes of data collection, hazard monitoring and vulnerability assessment, and warning responsiveness. The effects of the December 2004 tsunami show only too dramatically the consequences of inadequate hazard knowledge and failed warnings.

The International Early Warning Programme was launched at the WCDR as a partnership of mainly UN agencies, as a vehicle to stimulate cooperation and action to build effective people-centred early warning systems worldwide. The programme seeks to expand existing good practices to vulnerable countries for all hazards, to support capacity building, and to promote systematic and holistic early warning systems internationally. The programme is coordinated and supported by the Bonn, Germany-based ISDR Platform for the Promotion of Early Warning. Governance arrangements and a draft work programme currently are under development.

### 3. Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels

*Disasters can be substantially reduced if people are well informed and motivated towards a culture of disaster prevention and resilience, which in turn requires the collection, compilation and dissemination of relevant knowledge and information on hazards, vulnerabilities and capacities.*

HFA, Para. 18

The Cluster Panel stressed that education for creating a culture of disaster resilience is an interactive process of mutual learning among people and institutions. It needs to be based within but also to encompass far more than formal education at schools and universities. It is fundamental to sustainability and affects all aspects of life, passing experience between generations to overcome universal barriers of ignorance, apathy, subject boundaries and the lack of political will that are too often present in communities. Education, sharing experiences and the building of capacities are primary elements to create and support community resilience as a key to reducing disaster risks.



Education should also involve the enhancement and use of indigenous knowledge, and where appropriate, the use of more modern techniques for protecting people, habitat, livelihoods, and cultural heritage from natural hazards. The inadequate knowledge of hazards and their related disaster risks, and an overall lack of awareness about disaster reduction and preparation measures repeatedly lead to otherwise preventable loss of life and damage in major disasters. Preparation and protection provided through education is less costly than learning through tragedy.

The cluster emphasized first and foremost that education for disaster reduction needs to be understood as a process taking place over time to benefit people, whether it occurs in schools, through technical subjects in universities, among people in a local community, and equally importantly, for individuals. Three realms of the education process were identified of particular importance for advancing disaster reduction: professional and institutional awareness, traditional and indigenous knowledge, and the dynamic relationships by which professional or technical knowledge is able to be translated into increased capabilities demonstrated by practice. Throughout all of the dimensions of education, cooperation, exchange and shared experiences at local, national and regional levels are essential. These measures are at their most effective when linked to community needs, but also when they are open to the influences of experience and learning from elsewhere.

The thematic segment provided ample evidence that education proceeds through formal learning, professional and staff training, information technology, electronic and print media and other innovative actions that can facilitate the management and transfer the benefits of experience through knowledge and information. It needs to be recognized that children are a key agent in formal and informal means of learning and also are the basis for the future, but risk education also applies to all other citizens, official policymakers, professionals, organizations, community stakeholders. There is also the recognition that roles of women deserve particular consideration in educational processes, especially when working through community groups and NGOs in close contact with people where they are most exposed to hazard risks.

**Key issues highlighted** efforts that could

- Promote knowledge and behavioural change on disaster risks through both formal and informal education.
- Strengthen information and public awareness with a concentration on the involvement of civil society and an expanded role of public media.
- Empower communities through capacity building; enhance community resilience by building knowledge bases.
- Reinforce partnerships and encourage cooperation on disaster risk reduction policy and practice.
- Recognize the value of traditional and indigenous knowledge systems, and utilize the wisdom and information they contain.
- Incorporate disaster research in science policy, with increased emphasis devoted to applied research and practice.
- Combine appropriate uses of information technology with training in local communities to encourage wider opportunity for involvement and implementation.

**The technical sessions provided** a rich selection of examples and experience in which education and knowledge transfer is being used to advance the understanding and application of disaster reduction around the world. An excellent example of this was the presentation of a compilation of case studies, Disaster reduction and human security: Case studies and best practices, that has been published by the UNESCO Natural Science Sector and the Kyoto University Graduate School of Global Environmental Studies. It contains 93 case studies from 41 countries.

National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies have been able to draw on, and share the beneficial knowledge from numerous examples of best practice in building community resilience to disasters. To a significant extent, and demonstrated by the classic example of the Bangladesh Cyclone Preparedness Programme, there is a need to look beyond only needs and vulnerabilities to identify those capabilities that can be built upon in responding to local priorities. Simple applied research conducted by residents and volunteers can determine what works and what does not for local conditions, and the reasons that provide deeper understanding can be shared through documentation and dialogue. Additional country studies as well as innovative regional and global initiatives also were presented, details of which are available in the full thematic documentation of the WCDR on the ISDR website, [www.unisdr.org/wcdr/](http://www.unisdr.org/wcdr/). A variation on the need to bridge the large gap existing between what is known, in both technical terms as well as

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within people's own knowledge, was explored through the concept of 'case stations'. This concept is based on cross-referenced experiences in time, place and discipline that can allow for study as well as conditions that promote learning through a network of field campuses devoted to disaster risk reduction.

Education in a number of specialist areas was addressed in a manner that also focused on the multidisciplinary and applied research interests accommodated by each of them. Consideration of how societies encounter earthquakes and seek to address awareness through practical measures to transfer that knowledge within and between societies drew on the experience of both professional and international networks of specialists. Many new international initiatives for research and mitigation of floods and landslides were outlined. They are frequently organized around the collaboration of international technical agencies working with academic institutions, and are realized through national programmes that employ integrated, multi-hazard approaches to risk reduction. In a growing number of cases they represent emerging partnerships such as the forthcoming emerging International Centre for Water Hazard and Risk Management, established under the auspices of UNESCO and hosted by Public Works Research Institute in Tsukuba, Japan.

In these discussions many more examples were cited that drew on the experiences of organizational exchanges for the mutual benefit of technical practitioners and public administrators and decision-makers. These include such active organizations as the International Programme on Landslides, a collaboration of international agencies; the International Association of Earthquake Engineering, a collaborative of professionals; and the World Seismic Safety Institute which links technical abilities with individual country needs through practical advice and the exchange of experience. Among other institutional examples, there are also other forms of practical information resources available for wider use, such as the Internet-based World Housing Encyclopaedia, or the results of the more than 40 projects undertaken by the International Programme on Landslides. These all provide unprecedented opportunities to learn from collected global experience.

Within the context of social aspects of expanding awareness to disaster reduction, cultural heritage risk management was introduced as a welcome element of enhancement to preparedness measures. Examples were cited as the beneficial value of wider recognition of traditional building techniques and indigenous beliefs that reflect an understanding of natural phenomena. The social dimensions of awareness and education in creating a culture of prevention was addressed through specific discussions centred on gender balanced public awareness initiatives. By considering some circumstances that work to exclude segments of the population from active participation in disaster reduction activities within their own communities, pro-active approaches to address information rights and to activate emergent networks through community education programmes were identified. Popular forms of communication such as audio dramas, and games such as the widely used Riskland, adapted to local cultural attributes and everyday conditions, have proven to be both entertaining and effective.

In summary, lessons learned from the technical sessions include the recognition that education is a process for effective disaster reduction; knowledge, perception, comprehension and actions are four important steps; schools and formal education play important roles in developing knowledge about risk reduction, even as there is need for the inclusion of more specific subject matter; community, family and individual self-education are important for comprehension of knowledge and implementing risk reduction actions; and holistic education needs to include actions at local level, as well as its integration into policy.

Example partnerships for education presented in sessions under this cluster included:

The International Flood Initiative/Programme of UNESCO-Tsukuba Center, WMO, UNU, ISDR is aimed at promoting research, training and capacity-building, information networking and technical assistance against flood-related disasters. An international centre for water hazard and risk management will be established under the auspices of UNESCO in Tsukuba, Japan in late 2005 to serve as a global facility for the initiative.

The Global Open Learning Forum on Risk Education involves the non governmental organization, SEEDS (Sustainable Environment and Ecological Development Society), and Kyoto University in a forum of NGOs, universities and international organizations to provide professional knowledge to field practitioners in remote areas. It

fosters dialogue and the exchange of information and knowledge, transferring academic knowledge to practitioners through current analysis of field practices and interaction with people in the field. Training programmes, certified courses in the open-university model, and regular meetings and workshops in the regions of Asia, Africa and Latin America will activate the forum.

#### 4. Reduce the underlying risk factors

*Disaster risks related to changing social, economic, environmental conditions and land use, and the impact of hazards associated with geological events, weather, water, climate variability and climate change, are addressed in sector development planning and programmes as well as in post-disaster situations.*  
HFA, Para. 19

The Cluster Panel stressed that the heightened levels of current disaster risks result from a variety of causes, including exploitation of natural resources and alteration of the natural environment. This was compounded by a lack of understanding of the forces that caused these risks. This gap was strongly evident as many of the discussants were more at ease in suggesting ways forward rather than identifying the root causes of vulnerability. While this focus may be understood as reflecting a positive interest in defining practical solutions, it can also indicate a willingness to sidestep the complexity or political sensitivity in diagnosing causal patterns of vulnerability as the root causes of disasters.

There are a number of causal factors of disaster risk, associated with both urban and rural development. These include land management, integrated resources management, industrial and economic development, health risks, and building and construction aspects. Social issues relevant at the community level, as well as gender issues, also play a role in understanding and reducing risk.

There was a concern to take a closer look at the environmental aspects of disasters, and particularly in the critical roles in disaster reduction of managing and maintaining environmental systems to reduce the impact of disasters. Other key factors that compound disaster risks were identified: development processes and the risks that they pose (e.g. natural resource exploitation, urban development, environmental degradation such as may be caused by soil erosion or deforestation; structures exposed to disaster risk (e.g. public infrastructure, residential housing, critical facilities such as hospitals, heritage assets; institutional and financial frameworks in social settings (e.g. building codes, financing and insurance for disaster mitigation, community actions for prevention, poverty and livelihood, etc.); and mechanisms to deal with risk, within the larger perspective of sustainable development.

While discussions were clustered around the five themes of the WCDR, the participants showed particular interest in matters of governance, education, and risk reduction. The roles of different stakeholder groups were also recognized as crucial determinants in reducing vulnerability and risk. It was observed that while risks managed by national and local governments are well understood and often mapped, the risks that are managed by communities and businesses are more often neglected.

Since localized community-based disaster management is now accepted as a critical aspect of risk reduction, risk reduction measures are likely to be most successful when they involve the direct participation of the communities exposed to hazards. Disaster reduction is most effective at the community level where specific local needs can be met.

Several areas were noted as being critical for advancing governance, education and technology systems for risk reduction. Identifying the vulnerability of communities and regions to hazards and risks represent one of the key areas of concentration for the future. The development of policy measures and management tools are important to form links between understanding pre-disaster vulnerability and risk management activities, and post-disaster relief and rehabilitation. The promotion of financial risk-sharing mechanisms, particularly insurance and reinsurance, public and private compensation schemes for victims, and dialogue with industry are all under-utilized especially as applied to vulnerable populations and communities.

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Building capacities and partnerships that comprehend the implications of disaster preparedness, and are able to motivate action, are the ultimate factors in reducing the destructive impacts of disasters. These capacities need to be built at all levels of governance, taking account of subsidiary decision-making and the capacities of stakeholders. These efforts can be reinforced by the further dedication of mainstream development actors to incorporate risk reduction into their activities. In each of these cases, there is a priority need to develop mechanisms that can bring other new and influential local stakeholders closer to the global action programmes and vice versa, as for example, a greater engagement of the business sector by creating new opportunities for their consultation and cooperation.

A number of pre-conditions were identified, with the need to meet them before concrete results can be secured. Most of them were related to the strengthening of public decision-making processes, from local to national. Risk reduction needs to be an integral part of national and sub-national/provincial development plans, besides linking it to existing sustainability programmes such as ISO 14001 and Local Agenda 21, and larger integrated natural resource management programmes. Comprehensive urban development strategies and proper land-use planning also are important to ensure that necessary conditions are in place to reduce the risk of damage from disasters.

The following key issues were highlighted, with repeated emphasis given to their interdependence:

- Good governance was noted as being the foundation block of effective risk reduction. Two examples were cited of particular importance: the development and maintenance of a regulatory environment, and securing strong partnerships between stakeholders.
- Community-based disaster management contributes to effective community based disaster management, while noting too, that such 'bottom-up' systems of management need to be linked with 'top-down' frameworks in a fully integrated disaster management system.
- Educational processes are essential at a number of critical levels: for preparing local communities to prepare and protect themselves; in building community-based disaster management abilities; for furthering public officials' knowledge and abilities to manage risk reduction; and in protecting schools and the education of children.
- Community health care needs to be delivered on a routine basis through good primary health systems that additionally address the immediate health needs associated with disasters. As such, disaster risk reduction at the community level can and should be a part of well-provided and effective primary health care programmes.
- Gender issues need to be included within any disaster plans, as women and children are more dependent on their immediate vicinity; they are more vulnerable to the consequences of hazards. Gender concerns must attract a far higher political priority than present levels for significant progress to be made.
- Professional circles know well how environmental protection within both natural and urban environments is linked to good environmental management and disaster mitigation. Wise and considered environment management is in itself risk reduction. By contrast, the urban environment presents very serious threats to people and property in otherwise disaster-prone areas.

Technical sessions provided examples and details of all these principles. Lessons result from the analytical consideration of events, as well as from the consequences of negative experiences when painful lessons are thrust upon authorities. The key to evaluating post-disaster lessons is the organization of a government-led, multidisciplinary and intersectoral, collective exercise while the disaster is still fresh in the minds of officials and affected communities. This requires top political leadership, commitment and creative imagination of opportunities to learn the "art of change". The outcomes from collective learning exercises should have a strong focus on risk reduction, and then be used by planning teams at the local level to prepare future disaster management plans. Several types of effective learning proceeded from the various presentations and discussions.

Learning how the environment itself possesses protective mechanisms can significantly reduce hazard impacts. These mechanisms need to be identified, and understood more readily, but more importantly they have to be developed and maintained in practice as public policies to secure overall environmental protection. Within only a month after the disaster, UNEP's Task Force for the Indian Ocean Tsunami had begun work with affected countries to mount long-term environmental restoration programmes, related to coastal area recovery, waste management, impact assessments and the recovery of mangroves and coral reefs, etc.

Learning to protect health and medical facilities has led to some important initiatives by WHO and PAHO and initiatives in individual countries like Colombia, Peru, Turkey and Nepal among others, to ensure hospitals and other medical facilities are structurally resilient to disaster risks. The focus on protecting health facilities also encourages attention for effective disaster plans to be in place within individual facilities to enable them to function effectively during disasters.

Learning the power of education demonstrates that educational curricula can absorb and disseminate information concerning natural hazards and personal protection. This provides in-built opportunities to transmit knowledge about local hazards and changing disaster risks, while building sustainability for all ages and therefore across generations. By examples provided, education and training has been used within local communities to train builders in safe construction techniques, farmers to diversify cropping patterns as drought protection etc. Professional training in disaster and risk management routinely embraces disaster risk reduction as well as emergency management, thus providing officials with a more balanced appreciation of the multiple issues involved in crisis events in the context of sustainable development.

Learning to translate the benefits of physical and financial protection presents a challenge in extending well-established practices in richer industrialized countries to underserved or impoverished populations elsewhere. Efforts to devise appropriate 'safety nets' to spread disaster risks or to transfer those risks to a wider community of interest invite new actors to invest in protecting people's livelihoods. As the success of the Grameen Bank has shown with regard to micro-investment initially in Bangladesh and now accepted globally, there is initial evidence of wide social and economic benefits to be gained in overturning long-held assumptions about marrying commercial potential with the needs of disaster-prone communities. Both the large scale resources of the commercial insurance industry as well as the local knowledge and dedication of local mutual aid societies promise innovations as those currently being pursued by the ProVention Consortium, the World Bank, and other international financial and academic institutions.

Learning to relate emergency relief to risk reduction - and vice versa, hinges very much on agencies' commitments to wider and closely linked endeavours such as those involving preparedness or longer-term recovery considerations. The Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies provide numerous examples of how this expanded sense of awareness and preparedness has been able to encompass community commitments to vulnerability and capacity assessments during recent years. This has resulted in the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and related national societies becoming leading initiators and motivators in developing risk reduction policies and implementation within local communities.

Learning how good ideas evolve into standard practice, supported by examples of institutionalised learning can be seen in Mongolia, where there has been an enthusiastic acceptance of the notion of community-based disaster management. Rooted in national cultural considerations that define rural livelihoods, coupled with a traditional regard for the social and economic values of the natural environment, updated views of disaster reduction have been incorporated into national policy. Thus, what was only an idea five years ago, has become an institutionalised pattern spreading throughout the country as part of a national safety culture.

## 5. Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels

*At times of disaster, impacts and losses can be substantially reduced if authorities, individuals and communities in hazard-prone areas are well-prepared and ready to act and are equipped with the knowledge and capacities for effective disaster management.*

HFA, Para. 20

The Cluster Panel stressed the challenges and opportunities that shape action, or its absence in preparedness for effective response, taking account of experience and insights gained from various settings. The importance from a human and financial perspective of enhancing the safety and well-being of hazard-affected communities has been accepted wisdom for decades. However, it is only in recent times that pre-disaster, safety-enhancing interventions have assumed greater importance in the political agendas of national, regional, and international actors. There is growing consensus that it is unethical

to ignore the human cost of inaction and its implications for the right to life and the safety of those who are often the most marginalized.

It is widely acknowledged that risk factors are on the increase. However, it is not readily apparent that there is an adequate understanding of the changing nature of risk and the implications of this for the design and development of future preparedness systems, or for actions that need to be taken to address underlying risk factors. This is particularly important in terms of disasters that are global in origin such as those associated with degradation of the environment, depletion of the Earth's natural resource base and climate variation and change. For the most part, the hazards and the growing levels of risk associated with these phenomena have not been addressed significantly from the perspective of disaster preparedness.

It is apparent that dynamic relationships between cause and effects intensify vulnerability increasing further exposure. The tenacity of the division persists between so-called "natural" and "human-made" disasters, as does the relief-development divide. It is imperative that early warning and disaster preparedness systems and their support become more robust, strategic and better suited to the changing and multi-dimensional nature of risks. The utility and effectiveness of preparedness systems are contingent on a comprehensive and multi-sectoral risk analysis.

It is crucial that future initiatives on early warning be context specific, have appropriate communication and coordination systems. They also need to become more accountable, sustainable, and "people-centred". There are continuing challenges to ensure that the development of early warning mechanisms are linked from global strategies to local application, including regional initiatives grounded in common or coordinated practices. It is equally critical that early warning procedures actually result in prompt decision-making and appropriate interventions including the organization of precautionary measures. Disaster risks need to be addressed as a shared responsibility.

National level disaster preparedness systems need to be familiar with, and linked to, international-level rescue and relief arrangements that are themselves clearly defined, predictable, and available to assist when catastrophic events overwhelm capabilities at the national and regional level. There is strong consensus on the need for a more unified, coherent, and concerted approach to early warning and disaster preparedness by international level actors. At a minimum, there needs to be clarity on the overall institutional framework, but there are also strong demands for common standards, agreement on terminology, readily available tools and guidelines. This is increasingly being expressed as predictability in the type and level of support available both in the pre-disaster and immediate onset phases of an emerging crisis.

In this regard, it is important that initiatives to strengthen response preparedness at the international level do not detract from the mobilization of resources that are needed to scale-up support for disaster preparedness at the local and national levels. Despite some important initiatives to strengthen disaster preparedness as part of an emerging global network, inadequate progress has been made in the development of a consistent normative framework, commonly utilized tools and sufficiently comprehensive knowledge bases. These facilities are critical in terms of both maintaining momentum in strengthening necessary institutionalized capabilities and in being able to measure the adequacy of preparedness capabilities and structures at local, national, regional and global levels.

Importantly, it is widely acknowledged that disaster preparedness systems generally are seriously under-funded. Disaster risks need to be addressed as a joint responsibility given the growing recognition of crises that create added risk levels beyond the frontiers of disaster-prone countries. It is critical that the international donor community and disaster-prone countries work together to identify appropriate mechanisms and arrangements that would enable more consistent and long-term funding that can strengthen disaster preparedness systems within the larger context of improved disaster risk management. Equally there is a pressing need for risk reduction to become much more integrated into ongoing development programmes with the expectation that resources for disaster risk management may become additional to the current reliance on humanitarian and emergency spending.

Key issues highlighted include:

- Political will, and the commitment to develop risk-conscious and safer societies, are critical for the translation of available knowledge and expertise into tangible and well-functioning early warning and disaster preparedness systems.
- Governance systems at local and national levels that are trusted, transparent, accountable, and enjoy the confidence of hazard-affected communities, are key to a productive and synergistic relationship between community and national-level early warning and preparedness systems.
- Adequate investment and appropriate allocation of resources for people-centred preparedness systems are fundamental to improved risk management and more resilient communities. As disaster risk reduction is, at core, a development concern, resources beyond those required for disaster relief (i.e. life-saving humanitarian needs) should be available in a more predictable and sustained manner in the future.
- With some exceptions, a general impression exists that much remains to be done in strengthening regional response and preparedness initiatives so neighbouring countries can respond with mutual support when needed.
- There is a crucial and urgent requirement for organizations of the United Nations system and other actors at the international level to define a strategic framework and agreed division of labour, with adequately earmarked resources to support and maintain enhanced levels of preparedness.

Technical sessions provided examples and details of all these principles.

Case studies presented in several technical sessions demonstrated that countries could become more resilient to disaster risks when they link their measures for disaster reduction and mitigation practices to the development of their response capabilities. Contingency plans are clearly essential for more effective response, but to be valid they have to be based on continually updated assessments of current risks. This also presumes a well-developed awareness and extensive involvement with the public in understanding the hazards to which people are exposed, their expected responses to warnings, and undertaking effective preparedness measures.

Experience shows that external response and emergency services are effective only to the extent that they can engage the commitment of a community, that the people are previously informed and prepared to respond, and that there is prior interest and designated roles for existing local institutions. This requires a coordinated process between national, sub-national authorities and local or community mechanisms that can only be developed and refined over a period of time, and prior to the occasion of an immediate threat.

There are continuing challenges to maintain an adequate measure of awareness, current interests in reducing risks, preparedness activities, and specialist emergency competencies during the possibly extended intervals between crisis events. Example initiatives were presented that showed how various approaches could keep the subject of disaster risks within a community's attention. A continuous research agenda can be devoted to translating educational knowledge and technical skills into applied practices that serve the community in multiple ways.

Using schools as both a centre of learning and as a source for local social mobilization was a useful example. Their value as motivating facilities can be expanded further by concentrating efforts to reinforce school structures themselves against earthquake risks, or by employing land use and construction methods which make them more resilient to possible damage by storms, floods or landslides. Children can learn about these practices at the same time that they and their family members make their schools a focal point for building a culture of prevention in the community.

The use of telecommunications within a community or local area is another area that can build improved disaster and risk management capabilities with an eye on preparedness. By the very nature of expanding communication around matters of risk awareness, the subject can contribute to environmental management through early warning of environmental hazards. Economic viability and development can be promoted by linking effective disaster response to the needs of economic continuity. Efforts to preserve institutional infrastructure and relationships are essential for collaboration and distributed responsibilities.

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Attention devoted to food security also invites a number of considerations related to preparedness, planning and disaster reduction. As this concern impacts most significantly on individual localities and types of livelihoods, the subject has much more far-reaching social, economic and political components and even regional environmental implications. While preparedness means providing information to the populations concerned, that is only part of a much more complex process ultimately demonstrated by what the people are able to do at the time of emergency.

When viewed in this manner, preparedness assumes a greater scale of associated responsibilities and invokes longer-term concerns such as climate variability, the occurrence of El Niño episodes, etc. This necessarily involves a degree of technical study and information more commonly identified with matters of risk identification and monitoring and therefore underlines the need for greater synergy between traditional preparedness and more contemporary aspects of disaster risk management. This in turn calls for a concentration on effective response being increasingly determined by coordination, wider partnerships and more integrated or cross-sectoral approaches that go much beyond specific emergency management capabilities.

The International Recovery Platform was launched at the WCDR as a network of international agencies and governments to provide consolidated support for strengthening post-disaster recovery. It represents a vision to reduce the underlying disaster risks by integrating risk reduction in disaster recovery and rehabilitation efforts. By drawing on the multiple abilities and respective relationships among organizations including ISDR, OCHA, UNDP, World Bank, the Asian Disaster Reduction Center, Asian Disaster Preparedness Center and the ProVention Consortium, the Recovery Platform launched by the Government of Japan aims to promote the widespread sharing of good practices and the application of lessons derived from previous experiences. The platform also expects to establish a network of specialists involved with international recovery experts to support the needs and interests of countries recovering from major disasters.

### Thematic Special Session: Promotion of Tsunami Disaster Mitigation in the Indian Ocean

Having occurred less than a month before the WCDR, the extended scope and extraordinarily severe consequences of the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster provoked the organization of a special thematic session on the subject of proceeding towards the establishment of tsunami early warning systems in the Indian Ocean by sharing experiences in the Pacific Ocean area. Motivated by a sense of professional solidarity, a practical purpose was served by this special session for the assembled cross section of the global disaster reduction community.

The purpose of the special session was to identify the issues to be considered by the parties involved in the establishment of the tsunami early warning system in the Indian Ocean from the professional point of view. Emphasis was given to enhancing warning systems of individual countries and the development of an international mechanism to coordinate those systems. By drawing on prior experience, the session focused upon the activities undertaken through the International Coordination Group for the Tsunami Warning System in the Pacific under the auspices of UNESCO/IOC.

Particular attention was given to the enhancement of tsunami warning systems in the Indian Ocean by sharing experiences from the countries of the Pacific Ocean countries. Reports from the Indian Ocean region revealed the importance of institutional and operational capacities in national and international systems.

The session proceeded to review the current capabilities in the countries of the Indian Ocean and reaffirmed that as a prerequisite and fundamental measure for mitigation of tsunami disasters, a tsunami early warning system should be established. The session recognized that a system should be established in which governments of the relevant countries have primary responsibility, but also the renewed need to enhance their individual warning systems. There



was widespread acknowledgement of the importance of support by the international community to develop an appropriate mechanism for warning coordination throughout the region.

Issues discussed included the promotion of knowledge about tsunamis, the identification and publicizing of high-risk areas, the means of delivering warnings to people in coastal areas, and the timely issuance of tsunami warnings. Presentations emphasized the importance of technical monitoring and related information systems and capabilities that could be much more widely employed for basic public awareness and warning practices to ensure the delivery of tsunami warnings to people at risk in the coastal areas as well as the importance of public education.

Actions that could be pursued by the international community to support the countries of the Indian Ocean included the provision of existing knowledge about tsunamis, expertise in preparation and use of tsunami-hazard maps, techniques for the issuance and dissemination of tsunami warnings, and enhancing human resource capabilities through the use of specialist technical services, seminars, and other forms of training.

The session called for urgent action to be taken within the next six months, specifically to establish an immediate interim warning system devised through the cooperation of the Japanese Meteorological Agency and the Pacific Typhoon Warning Centre. Other recommended activities included meetings for international coordination, assessment of tsunami early warning capabilities, conducting seminars to benefit individual governments, and disseminating tsunami warnings on an urgent provisional basis.

After six months the development of an international coordination function should enjoy priority. An integrated strategy is currently being implemented to establish a tsunami early warning system throughout the Indian Ocean. Comprehensive seminars concerning the tsunami early warning system also are being held to reinforce the needs for full-time designated official contacts in all countries concerned, and the promotion of wider sharing of observational data and information for the operation of the tsunami early warning system.

## Regional Sessions

*States and regional and international organizations should also support the capacities of regional mechanisms and organizations to develop regional plans, policies and common practices, as appropriate, in support of networking, advocacy, coordination, exchange of information and experience, scientific monitoring of hazards and vulnerability, and institutional capacity development and to deal with disaster risks.*

HFA, Para. 23

### Geographical proximity - common threats

With a shared objective to minimize the losses that affect development, discussion revolved around four pillars to integrate disaster risk reduction in socio-economic development processes: mainstreaming disaster management; advocacy for incorporating disaster management into development programmes; strengthening institutional capacities; and supporting research efforts and the associated activities which incorporate information technology and knowledge management.

In the case of Latin America and Caribbean countries, disasters have been drivers of change. Conceptual approaches originally grounded in addressing the needs of emergency response proceeded to an expanded consideration of preparedness measures, and then to reflect the longer-termed commitments of mitigation. Relationships were expanded to invoke the linkages between disasters and development. The continual presence and use of regional mechanisms has been instrumental in influencing national policies. However, the growing number of agencies involved in disaster reduction makes coordination of their activities an increasingly complicated responsibility. Disasters do not so much require new institutions but require existing institutions to rethink the ways in which they work. It was suggested that a regional approach is the most effective mechanism to achieve effective risk reduction.

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In Africa, while the numbers of disasters and affected people are steadily increasing, fatalities have declined dramatically due to better response capacities in the region and more effective international assistance. A similar situation has occurred in the Caribbean where the number of fatalities resulting from hurricanes has declined significantly, illustrating the effectiveness of early warning systems. However, it has also been observed that poverty still reduces the effectiveness of all of these risk reduction programmes.

Since natural disasters know no boundaries, regional initiatives are the most effective and logical risk reduction mechanisms. Therefore, effective programmes for the dissemination and exchange of information and the sharing of good practices provide important linkages among countries that share similar disaster risks. In this regard, mechanisms should be implemented to ensure the quality and reliability of information as well as to guarantee its effective dissemination.

Participants justified the importance of regional cooperation by pointing out that it is the most effective way to link national and international efforts, generate well-established political, policy and institutional frameworks, and provide measures of sustainability for risk reduction activities. Additionally, by working together, national and local organizations can achieve a collective impact that they could never achieve if they worked individually.

### **Central America in Perspective: Regional Challenges in Risk Reduction**

Organized by the Coordination Centre For the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America (CEPRENAC), participants recognized that even as the region has been considered a pioneer in conceptualising regional collaboration, actual actions to reduce natural disaster risks are still to be implemented. Main challenges remain with increasing collaboration and improving coordination at regional level to facilitate progress in proceeding from the expression of conceptual frameworks to actual actions and practical results.

There is consensus on understanding disaster risk reduction as a development issue and not as a humanitarian issue. Risk management should become an integral component of development programmes. Participants highlighted the fact that current economic policies could increase social vulnerability to disasters, such as those associated with the establishment of free trade agreements. Other recommendations emphasized that special attention be given to the poorest strata of society, giving special consideration to cultural and ethnic differences.

There was general agreement on the need that any proposed plans or strategies must be concrete, measurable, and realistic. Decentralization of risk reduction initiatives and programmes is required to reflect local needs more effectively and to enable better responses to them. Capacity building for local authorities and institutions needs to be a priority of any proposed regional programmes.

An urgent need was expressed for evaluating the impact of work underway to optimise resources and make necessary adjustments. The "Hurricane Mitch +5" meeting held in 2003 was a first step in that direction.

The international agencies working in the region expressed a preference to support and promote regional efforts. These efforts increased the impact of risk reduction programmes and also contributed to the strengthening of existing regional frameworks and institutional structures.

### **African Regional Discussion**

The objective of the session was to discuss mutually beneficial issues concerning the environment and disaster risk reduction in Africa. The adoption of the African Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction by the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) in 2004, the Plan of Implementation as well as the Guideline for Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction in Development were highlighted as examples of the significant progress made in Africa during the past year.

National platforms to promote disaster risk reduction have been newly established in nine countries, with exploratory discussions continuing in several others. These platforms are increasingly being recognized as enhancing multi-sectoral collaboration, and providing impetus to mainstream disaster risk reduction into development practices. The session noted that various networks for disaster risk reduction have been established between national governments, NGOs, journalists, sub-regional organizations and disaster risk reduction experts.

It was emphasized that the momentum gained in Africa over the past two years needs to be maintained, and preferably even be accelerated by embarking on an intensified implementation process through a commonly agreed plan of action. More African governments are proceeding to establish national platforms and incorporating disaster risk reduction into national development policies. Another useful feature cited was the encouragement for governments to link disaster reduction objectives with the preparation of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. In these various respects, the ISDR secretariat and UNDP's Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, Disaster Reduction Unit expressed an interest in being supportive and welcomed the opportunity to work in partnership.

Participants felt strongly that the outcomes of the WCDR should be used to raise the awareness of disaster risk more effectively in Africa. There is also a strong need for information sharing and collaboration which could be facilitated by the ISDR in Africa. A collaborative network to build a knowledge base and share information can advance this.

Participants raised other significant issues. With the recent impact of the tsunami in everyone's mind, there was support for establishing an early warning system located in Africa. The long standing awareness of the need for a collaborative information sharing network was again advanced as a means to build a knowledge base and to share information among a wider range of people involved in disaster reduction activities. The role of women in environmental protection and implementing the ISDR was emphasized. Attention was additionally drawn to 'silent' or persistent disaster situations like HIV/AIDS that may not attract as much media attention as singular events.

### **Asian Regional Discussion**

Organized by the ISDR Asia Partnership (IAP), a collective which includes the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC), the Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC), UNDP/BCPR, UN/ESCAP, UN/OCHA, and UN/ISDR, the session's themes encompassed recent regional efforts in disaster reduction and the role of regional action in implementing WCDR outcomes. There were three specific objectives:

- To discuss and identify how the Hyogo Framework for Action would be implemented at the national and regional levels in Asia;
- To discuss countries' expectations of regional institutions for supporting the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action; and
- To discuss how regional intergovernmental cooperation organizations and regional institutions and IAP would work together to ensure the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action.

After noting that Asia is the world's region most heavily affected by natural disasters, participants recommended a shift in emphasis from post-disaster reaction to pre-disaster prevention. They further asked that policy makers should immediately adopt risk reduction actions. It was recognized that there have unfortunately not been adequate intra-regional mechanisms to facilitate coordination, research, training and information sharing. Many participants expressed their hope that recent catastrophic disasters such as the earthquake that devastated Bam in Iran and the Indian Ocean tsunami would provide the necessary momentum for more natural disaster risk reduction programmes across the region.

Multi-country disaster risk reduction initiatives should be developed to increase the impact of these programmes and optimise the use of available resources. Regional disaster reduction mechanisms should be developed for implementing the Hyogo Framework for Action. The view was expressed that such arrangements should focus on establishing early warning systems, the identification and assessment of regional expertise, support for training programmes at all levels, and the wider utilization of newly available information tools such as satellite imagery.

### **Small Island Developing States (SIDS)**

The objective of the session was to reach a conclusion on the strategies and activities for improving disaster risk reduction in SIDS and to convey their experience for consideration in the development of future frameworks for action in advancing global disaster reduction. SIDS' uniqueness results from the frequency and intensity of natural and environmental hazards and related disaster risks and their increasing impacts.

The resilience of SIDS has not kept pace with their increased exposure to risks and as a result they face disproportionately high economic, social and environmental costs. Some of the root problems SIDS face range from a dependency on international trade, limited employment and livelihood possibilities, costly infrastructure and administration, limited institutional capacity and natural resources, poverty, high freight costs due to geographical isolation, risk of loss of biodiversity, limited disaster response alternatives, and an increase in the risk of pollution due to shipping and tourism. These circumstances exacerbate island states' exposure to natural hazards and their limited abilities to respond to crisis events.

The integration of disaster risk reduction and development practices was a recurring theme in the discussion. As SIDS have preserved their traditional coping and community mechanisms, they must continue to rely on their localized economy, local resources as well as community cooperation, collaboration and support. For these reasons it is crucial that efforts to develop resilience and coping mechanisms must be tailored to SIDS' particular needs

The meeting emphasised the need to define approaches of national intra- and inter-regional collaboration in implementing the Hyogo Framework for Action. The common goals and collective commitments in the Barbados Programme of Action, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the Millennium Development Goals should be consistent with the outcomes of the WCDR. However, as a certain lack of regional mechanisms also was noted in some areas, recommendations were made to strengthen existing ones, and as may be required, thought given to establish new regional centres.

In consideration of the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster, strong endorsement was given to the need for more effective early warning systems for SIDS, in line with the Barbados Programme of Action and the recently agreed Mauritius Strategy for the further implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

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**Cluster 1:** United Nations Development Programme, Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (UNDP/BCPR), ProVention Consortium Secretariat, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), United Nations Volunteers (UNV)

**Cluster 2:** World Meteorological Organization (WMO), United Nations University (UNU), European Commission Joint Research Centre (EC/JRC)

**Cluster 3:** United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

**Cluster 4:** United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD)

**Cluster 5:** Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), World Food Programme (WFP)

### Thematic Special Session on Promotion of Tsunami Disaster Mitigation in the Indian Ocean

Japan Meteorological Agency, Cabinet Office of Japan, Japan Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport, Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC), UNESCO/Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC)

**Regional Sessions and Meetings:** Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction (IATF/DR), Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC), Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC), Council of Europe, European Commission Joint Research Centre (EC/JRC), Organization of American States (OAS), Inter-American Committee on Natural Disaster Reduction (IACNDR), South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC), Coordination Centre for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America (CEPREDENAC), ISDR Africa Outreach Programme, United Nations Environmental Programme, United Nations Development Programme, Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), ISDR Asia Partnership (IAP), UN/ESCAP, UN/OCHA

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Common statement of the Special Session  
on the Indian Ocean Disaster:  
risk reduction for a safer future

Annex II  
Report of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction  
A/CONF.206/6

## Annex II

### **Common statement of the Special Session on the Indian Ocean Disaster: risk reduction for a safer future**

The World Conference on Disaster Reduction,

*Extending* its deepest sympathies and condolences to the victims of the recent tsunami disaster and their families and to the people and Governments of those countries, and expressing our deepest concern over the negative economic, social, psychological, environmental and other consequences and impacts of the tsunami disaster,

*Commending* the national and international community's prompt and generous support and contributions to the relief efforts, which truly reflect the spirit of solidarity and commitment to addressing challenges facing mankind in a collective and collaborative manner,

*Recalling* General Assembly resolutions 57/256 of 6 February 2003, 58/214 and 58/215 of 23 December 2003, and 59/231 and 59/233 of 22 December 2004 on natural disasters and vulnerability and the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction,

*Recalling* also that in its resolution 58/214 the Assembly recommended the implementation of the outcomes of the Second International Conference on Early Warning, held under the auspices of the United Nations at Bonn, Germany, from 16 to 18 October 2003,

*Recalling* further the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World adopted at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction held in Yokohama, Japan, from 23 to 27 May 1994,

*Recognizing* that severe natural hazards such as earthquakes, floods, typhoons, cyclones, droughts and tsunamis respect no borders and remain major threats to all people, and hinder social and economic progress, in particular in the developing countries,

*Recognizing* also the importance of national and local capacity building to effectively address the impact of disasters,

*Emphasizing* the importance of continued international and regional dialogue and discussion in order to build understanding, solidarity and commitment to improve early warning systems and to reduce disasters,

*Emphasizing* the need to comprehensively assess all the lessons learnt from the tsunami disaster,

*Emphasizing* also the Special Leaders' Meeting of the Association of South-East Asian Nations on the Aftermath of the Earthquake and Tsunamis, held in Jakarta on 6 January 2005, which agreed to establish a regional early warning system such as a Regional Tsunami Early Warning Centre on the Indian Ocean and the South-East Asia region,

*Taking note of* the outcomes of the United Nations Conference to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, held in Mauritius from 10 to 14 January 2005, and in particular the support expressed at the Conference for a global early warning system,



*Responding to* the request to launch a process to establish a regional early warning system, including for tsunami, by the resumed session of the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly,

*Noting* the proposals to expedite the development of a global tsunami early warning capability, to include the Indian Ocean, drawing on the experience of existing regional tsunami warning system in the Pacific Ocean.

*Noting also* the proposals for establishing tsunami early warning systems already under consideration as announced by individual countries of the Indian Ocean region,

*Taking note* of the discussions and conclusions of the special session on the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster at this World Conference on Disaster Reduction and the need to coordinate and examine expeditiously the various proposals made in this context, taking into account the findings of the thematic sessions held during the Conference,

*Emphasizes* the importance of regional cooperation and coordination in disaster reduction, including enhanced institutional arrangements, technical cooperation based on most effective technical equipment and capacity building to effectively address the impact of natural disasters;

*Recognizes* the urgent need, as evidenced by the devastation caused by the earthquake and the tsunami in the Indian Ocean, to strengthen national systems and to expand existing mechanisms for sharing of information and best practices in disaster detection, early warning, prevention, and assessment of natural disasters and for disaster relief, post-disaster rehabilitation and reconstruction;

*Recommends* that necessary regional disaster reduction mechanisms be established and strengthened as soon as possible for all relevant natural hazards, which should include, *inter alia*, specialized collaborative regional centres, networks for information exchange, early warning systems, establishment of databases and knowledge management, use of modern science and technology, and strategies to reduce disaster risks and to reduce impacts arising from natural disasters;

*Recognizes* also that early warning systems consist of (a) prior knowledge of the risks faced by communities, (b) technical monitoring and warning service for these risks, (c) dissemination of understandable warnings to those at risk, and (d) knowledge, public awareness and preparedness to act;

*Invites* the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations funds and programmes, United Nations specialized organizations and other international organizations and institutions, to integrate regional disaster reduction strategies into their work programmes and to develop concrete initiatives to implement such strategies;

*Emphasizes* the need for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction to identify, analyse and widely disseminate all the lessons learnt from the recent tsunami disaster;

*Requests* the secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction to prepare a report on regional mechanisms for disaster reduction, taking into consideration initiatives and ongoing discussion or arrangements in respective regions and sub-regions, if any, and to submit it to the 2005 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council and the sixtieth session of the General Assembly;

*Requests* the Economic and Social Council to include regional disaster reduction mechanisms into the agenda of the humanitarian affairs segment of its 2005 substantive session;

*Invites* the Secretary-General to include regional mechanisms for disaster reduction in the agenda of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly and to submit a report thereon to the General Assembly;

*Welcomes* the priority to be placed on disaster reduction, including early warning, at the Third Earth Observation Summit at the Ministerial level, to be held in Brussels on 16 February 2005;

*Welcomes* the proposed convening of a Ministerial Meeting on Regional Cooperation on Tsunami Early Warning Arrangements by the Government of Thailand, to be held at Phuket on 28 and 29 January 2005, which aims to lend further political impetus to the relevant outcomes of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction and to mobilize necessary resources for the establishment of tsunami early warning systems in the Indian Ocean;

*Welcomes* the generous offer by Germany to host a United Nations conference on early warning in Bonn in early 2006 and invites Member States, all relevant United Nations organisations, funds and programmes and relevant international and regional organizations, supported by the Platform for the Promotion of Early Warning to participate, with the following objectives: (a) to implement the International Early Warning Programme, proposed at the Second International Conference on Early Warning, held at Bonn, Germany, from 16 to 18 October 2003, and launched at the present World Conference, (b) to identify priority areas for the implementation of early warning systems, taking into account the vulnerabilities of countries to the different hazards, the current status of their warning systems, including the ongoing support, technical and institutional capacities, engagement of relevant actors, and shortcomings, gaps and barriers to implementation, and (c) to assess and monitor the implementation of early warning systems, including the development and use of guidelines, criteria and benchmarking for effective early warning systems;

*Recognizes* the need to use the experience of the existing Pacific Ocean tsunami early warning systems, making use of the existing coordination mechanisms of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission and other relevant international and regional organisations, utilizing the planning process of the Global Earth Observation System of Systems under the intergovernmental Group on Earth Observations, and including comprehensive actions such as the assessment of tsunami risks, including a range of advanced technical systems (for example satellite based, high precision dynamic sea level measurements and buoys that provide real time measurements of seismic and oceanographic parameters), as well as the detection and warning of hazardous events, the development of response plans, public education programmes, and resilient shelters, lifelines and protective infrastructure;

*Calls* for the establishment of an effective and durable tsunami early warning system for the Indian ocean;

*Emphasizes* that a tsunami early warning system for the Indian Ocean must be tailored to the specific circumstances of the Indian Ocean and the individual requirements of countries, under the coordination of the United Nations, and that those countries must be the ones to determine the shape and nature of the system;

*Recommends* that elements of a forward strategy to establish an Indian Ocean tsunami early warning system can include a preparatory technical scoping meeting, assessment of needs in countries of the Indian Ocean, if requested by those countries, regional seminars and coordination meetings, as necessary, a regional planning conference, and the preparation and dissemination of public awareness and other appropriate material;

*Appreciates* the steps taken or to be taken by countries of the Indian Ocean to provide for interim tsunami early warning in the Indian Ocean;

*Commends* the many generous offers of financial and technical assistance made by key countries across the globe to help establish a tsunami early warning system for the Indian Ocean.

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## United Nations Conference Documents

This section provides a summary of the UN documents prepared for and adopted by the World Conference on Disaster Reduction.

### Introduction

The Conference built on the implementation of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action of 1994, aiming at:

- Assessing achievements and identifying good practices;
- Defining the remaining challenges, critical needs and opportunities in disaster reduction initiatives worldwide and examining emerging issues; and,
- Developing a set of objectives and areas of action for disaster risk reduction to implement the objectives of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation for Sustainable Development, as essential conditions to achieve the relevant Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

In its resolution 58/214 of 23 December 2003, the United Nations General Assembly decided to convene a World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Kobe, Hyogo, Japan, from 18 to 22 January 2005 and requested the Inter-Agency secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR) to serve as the secretariat of the Conference and to coordinate its preparatory activities. The preparatory process was initiated early in 2004, with the convening of a Preparatory Committee, led by a Bureau representing all regional groups. The Committee met twice, in sessions held in Geneva on 6-7 May 2004 and 11-12 October 2004. The Bureau was composed of representatives from Ecuador (Chair), Germany, Islamic Republic of Iran (Rapporteur), Morocco, Russian Federation, and Japan as ex-officio member in its capacity as host country for the Conference. A special conference unit was created in the Inter-Agency secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction. At its second session, the Preparatory Committee established a Drafting Committee in Geneva (which became the Main Committee in Kobe), whose main task was to oversee the issuance of the Review of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World, and to produce the two main outcome documents of the Conference, namely what was eventually adopted by the conference as the "Hyogo Declaration" and the "Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters".

Some 4,000 participants from 168 States, 78 observer organizations, 161 non-governmental organizations, 154 media organizations represented by 562 journalists attended the World Conference on Disaster Reduction. Substantive discussions took place around three high level round tables, and in 46 sessions focused on five thematic clusters. With approximately 40,000 visitors and participants, the Public Forum offered a platform for exchange of information with the public; it hosted 66 workshops, 82 poster sessions and 189 organizations held exhibition booths.

### Review of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World

(A/Conf.206/L.1)

The review was prepared by the secretariat in accordance with General Assembly Resolutions 56/195, paragraph 18, and 57/256, paragraph 4, 5, and 7, directing it to be undertaken and reported at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR).

Through a broad consultation process, the document benefited from inputs by the Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction (IATF/DR), Governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations. The Yokohama Review is an analysis of progress achieved from 1994 (when the Yokohama Conference took place) to date. The document reflects the current state of awareness and achievements, limitations and constraints; it presents consolidated observations about global disaster risk reduction.

## Accomplishments, gaps and challenges stressed in the Review of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World

### A. Accomplishments

Major accomplishments have been made in the realization of the goals of the Yokohama Strategy, widely if not universally grounded in understanding among countries that disaster risk reduction is essential for sustainable development. There is growing awareness also that developmental activities may in some instances create or worsen vulnerabilities. The principles of the Yokohama Strategy remain valid as means to guide the development of policy frameworks to enhance national and particularly, local capabilities in disaster reduction. Internationally, important multilateral agreements related to disaster risk reduction have been reached, including various conventions related to environmental threats and the specific resolutions, declarations and initiatives pertinent to achieving sustainable development, notably the Millennium Development Goals.

### B. Gaps and challenges

In addition to a lack of systematic implementation, cooperation and reporting of progress to reduce risk and vulnerability to disasters, contributors to the Yokohama Review process have identified key gaps and challenges. To be noted are: governance: organizational, legal and policy frameworks; risk identification, assessment, monitoring and early warning; knowledge management and education; reducing underlying risk factors; and preparedness for effective response and recovery. The Yokohama Review conclusions recognize that awareness and expressions of the importance of disaster risk reduction are illustrated by numerous individual examples and efforts. Many decision makers also know what is to be done, in some cases with resources already at their disposal. However, all stakeholders need to do much more to put their intentions into actions, if people around the world are indeed to become safer from hazards.

## Substantive outcome documents of the WCDR

Having taken note of gaps and remaining challenges since the 1994 Yokohama Conference, as shown in the Review of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World, WCDR participants adopted the following outcome documents:

- The Hyogo Declaration (**A/Conf.206/L.3 and A/Conf.206/L.3/Rev.1**). It is included in Chapter I, Resolution 1 of the report of the conference (**A/Conf.206/6**).

The Hyogo Declaration is the result of consensus achieved by the Conference through the work of its Main Committee. It was adopted in Kobe at the closing session of the WCDR on 22 January 2005. As stated by the Chairman of the Main Committee, Mr. Marco Ferrari, the Declaration reflects a political will to increase attention to disaster reduction and recognizes that it is critically important that the Hyogo Framework for Action be translated into concrete action at all levels to reduce disaster risk and vulnerability.

- The Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters. (**A/Conf.206/L.2 and A/Conf.206/L.2/Rev.1**). It is included in Chapter I, Resolution 2 of the report of the conference (**A/Conf.206/6**).

The document, adopted on 22 January 2005, is the result of negotiations in the Drafting Committee that took place in Geneva in November and December 2004 and by its successor, the Main Committee in Kobe in January 2005. The Conference provided a unique opportunity to promote a strategic and systematic approach to reducing vulnerabilities and risks to hazards. It underscored the need for, and identified ways of building the resilience of nations and communities to disasters.

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The Hyogo Framework for Action is based on lessons learned and gaps identified in the review process of the Yokohama Strategy. Five priorities were identified as well as a number of concrete and specific measures that require implementation at local, national, regional and international levels. These priorities are:

1. Ensure that disaster risk reduction is a national and local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation
2. Identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and early warning
3. Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels
4. Reduce the underlying risk factors
5. Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response.

## Special Session on the Indian Ocean Disaster: Risk Reduction for a Safer Future

### Item 8 of the agenda

A common statement of the Special Session on the Indian Ocean Disaster: Risk Reduction for a Safer Future (A/Conf.206/L.6/Rev.1) was delivered at the conclusion of this session at the Conference's 5th plenary meeting, on 20 January 2005. It was agreed to annex it to the final report of the conference (A/Conf.206/6, Annex II). This statement reflects the many views expressed in the lead-up to this Special Session and in statements at the session and in other sessions at the Conference. It "emphasizes the need for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction to identify, analyse and widely disseminate all the lessons learnt from the recent tsunami disaster". It "requests the secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction to prepare a report on regional mechanisms for disaster reduction, taking into consideration initiatives and ongoing discussions or arrangements in respective regions and sub-regions, (if any) and to submit it to the 2005 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council and the sixtieth session of the General Assembly". It also "requests the Economic and Social Council to include regional disaster reduction mechanisms into the agenda of the humanitarian affairs segment of its 2005 substantive session."

Initial proposals made for this Special Session by the People's Republic of China and by Germany

(a) The Secretariat of the World Conference was asked by the Delegation of the People's Republic of China to circulate its proposal entitled "Establishing regional mechanisms on surveillance, prevention and assessment of severe natural disasters" as an official document of the Conference (A/Conf.206/L.4). The draft emphasized the importance of regional cooperation and coordination to effectively address the impact of natural disasters. It recommended that necessary regional disaster reduction mechanisms be established as soon as possible and invited international organizations to integrate regional disaster reduction strategy into their work programmes and work out concrete initiatives to develop or assist in and support the development of such mechanisms. The document was circulated to participants of the Conference.

### Indian Ocean Tsunami

A minute of silence was observed at the opening ceremony of the Conference in memory of the victims of the Indian Ocean disaster.

The disaster killed over 300,000 people around the Indian Ocean, more 200,000 of them Indonesian.

In the early hours of the morning of Sunday 26 December 2004 a massive earthquake measuring 9.0 on the open Richter scale struck the west coast of northern Sumatra. The epicentre was some 30 kilometres under the seabed and 250 kilometres south-southwest of Banda Aceh. The first quake was followed by aftershocks ranging from 6 to 7.3, themselves large enough to destroy thousands of lives and livelihoods. The quake triggered powerful tsunamis reaching ten metres in height, and these moved through neighbouring parts of the Indian Ocean at over 500 kilometres an hour, wrecking coastal areas in India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Thailand and the Maldives, as well as in Myanmar, Seychelles and Somalia.

Source: OCHA Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP): Flash Appeal 2005 for Indian Ocean Earthquake - Tsunami



(b) The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany proposed a draft resolution entitled "Draft elements and considerations for a resolution on early warning for natural disasters" for a Third International Conference on Early Warning (**A/Conf.206/L.5**).

The Conference would be convened and organized with the secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, through its Platform for Promotion of Early Warning, and would be held in Bonn, Germany, in early 2006, financed by the Government of Germany. The objectives of the Conference are: (a) to activate the implementation of the International Early Warning Programme launched at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction; (b) to identify priority areas for the implementation of early warning systems, taking into account the vulnerabilities of countries to different hazards, the current status and capacity of their warning systems, and the potential for quickly improving the effectiveness and capacity of their warning systems; (c) to assess and monitor the implementation of early warning systems, taking into account criteria and guidelines for effective early warning systems, technical and institutional capacities, engagement of relevant actors, and shortcomings, gaps and barriers to implementation.

## Organization of work and Main Committee

The provisional agenda and annotations to its 14 items contained in **A/Conf.206/1** include background and suggested action to be taken during the Conference. United Nations document **A/Conf.206/2** provides for provisional rules of procedure for the Conference. The second session of the Preparatory Committee agreed to function under provisional rules of procedure adopted at the first session, as contained in **A/Conf.206/PC(II)/2**. Those provisional rules of procedure were maintained as applicable for the World Conference. The Preparatory Committee approved arrangements for the accreditation of relevant non-governmental organizations and other major groups to the Conference (**A/Conf.206/3**) for their subsequent participation in the World Conference on Disaster Reduction and its preparatory process.

At its first meeting on 18 January the Conference adopted its agenda (**A/Conf.206/4**).

Rule 4 of the provisional rules of procedure of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction provided that a Credentials Committee would be appointed at the beginning of the Conference, based on the composition of the Credentials Committee of the General Assembly of the United Nations, to examine the credentials of representatives and report to the Conference. The Conference appointed a Credentials Committee composed of: Austria, Benin, Bhutan, Brazil, China, Ghana (Chair: Mr. Joseph Kwabena Odei), the Russian Federation, Trinidad and Tobago and the United States of America. The Credentials Committee held two meetings, on 21 and 22 January 2005. Its report (**A/Conf.206/5**: Report of the Credentials Committee) is included in the report of the conference **A/Conf.206/6** in Chapter I, Resolution 3.

At its 1st plenary meeting, on 18 January 2005, the Conference, in accordance with rule 46 of its



Photo courtesy of IISD/ENB Reporting Services/Kimo Goree, Franz Dejon

### Drafting Committee

Around 70 States participated in the open-ended Drafting Committee created at the second session of the Preparatory Committee. Participants met in Geneva to consider the Review of the Yokohama Strategy and negotiate the draft programme outcome document and the draft declaration initiated by Japan. In Kobe, the Main Committee continued that work and finalized the two negotiated texts. Eventually, the Conference took note of the Yokohama Review and approved the Hyogo Declaration and Hyogo Framework for Action. Mr. Marco Ferrari (Switzerland) chaired the Drafting Committee and the Main Committee.

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provisional rules of procedure, created a Main Committee to draft the WCDR outcome documents (Declaration and Framework for Action 2005-215). Mr. Marco Ferrari (Switzerland) was elected Chairman of the Main Committee. The Main Committee met throughout the Conference and submitted its report on the last day (**A/Conf.206/L.8**: Draft report of the Main Committee).

### Report of the Conference

(A/Conf.206/6)

The three resolutions adopted by the Conference: the Hyogo Declaration, the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-215: Building the resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters and the report of the Credentials Committee constitute Chapter I of the report. Chapter II details the attendance and organization of work of the plenary meetings. Chapter III reports on the general debate (item 7 of the Agenda) that took place at the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 6th plenary meetings. Chapter IV reports on the Special Session on the Indian Ocean disaster. The "Common statement of the Special Session on the Indian Ocean disaster: risk reduction for a safer future" that was tabled at the session appears as annex II of the report. Chapter V summarizes item 11 of the agenda: the Review of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World. Chapter VI reports on the thematic segment of the Conference; Chapter VII reports on the Public Forum. Chapter VIII is devoted to the adoption of the Conference Declaration and programme outcome document, the Hyogo Framework for Action, 2005-2015. Chapter IX reports on the conclusion of the Conference with the adoption of the Draft Report of the Conference (**A/Conf.206/L.7**).

### Daily programmes

The Conference prepared a daily programme available in the following documents:

A/Conf.206/OD/1

Daily programme, Tuesday, 18 January 2005

A/Conf.206/OD/2

Daily programme, Wednesday, 19 January 2005

A/Conf.206/OD/3

Daily programme, Thursday, 20 January 2005

A/Conf.206/OD/4

Daily programme, Friday, 21 January 2005

A/Conf.206/OD/5

Daily programme, Saturday, 22 January 2005

### In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all.

#### Report of the Secretary-General.

(Abstract)

A/59/2005

21 March 2005

"Natural disasters

65. The devastating impact of the Indian Ocean tsunami has reminded us all of the vulnerability of human life to natural disasters, and also of the disproportionate effect they have on poor people. Unless more determined efforts are made to address the loss of lives, livelihoods and infrastructure, disasters will become an increasingly serious obstacle to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The World Conference on Disaster Reduction, held in early 2005, adopted the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015, which identifies strategic objectives and priority areas to reduce disaster risk in the next 10 years. We must proceed with its implementation.

66. The countries of the Indian Ocean region, with the help of the United Nations and others, are now taking steps to establish a regional tsunami early warning system. Let us not forget, however, the other hazards that people in all regions of the world are exposed to, including storms, floods, droughts, landslides, heat waves and volcanic eruptions. To complement broader disaster preparedness and mitigation initiatives, I recommend the establishment of a worldwide early warning system for all natural hazards, building on existing national and regional capacity. To assist in its establishment, I shall be requesting the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction secretariat to coordinate a survey of existing capacities and gaps, in cooperation with all United Nations system entities concerned, and I look forward to receiving its findings and recommendations. When disasters strike, we also need improved rapid response arrangements for immediate humanitarian relief, ..."

## Information papers circulated during the Conference

An information note was prepared by the secretariat to facilitate the participation of delegates and observers in the World Conference on Disaster Reduction (**A/Conf.206/INF.1**).

The list of participants was provided in document **A/Conf.206/INF.3**.

The World Conference on Disaster Reduction was asked to endorse the recommendations submitted by the secretariat in relation to the participation of intergovernmental organizations, which had requested observer status at the Conference, namely: Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB), International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) (**A/Conf.206/INF.4**).

The delegation of the United States of America submitted a paper entitled "Development of a Global Tsunami Warning System : U.S. Next Steps" (**A/Conf.206/INF.5**) which the secretariat circulated as an official document of the Conference. Its purpose was to highlight the need to expand and enhance the existing Pacific Ocean tsunami warning system to the Atlantic Ocean and Caribbean Sea. The U.S. underlined its strong commitment to the Group on Earth Observations and its efforts to develop an integrated and sustainable Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) that is given high priority by the G-8 nations.

The Federal Republic of Germany submitted a paper entitled "Concept of the Federal Republic of Germany for the Establishment of a Tsunami Early-Warning System in the Disaster Region of the Indian Ocean" (**A/Conf.206/INF.6**) which the secretariat circulated as an official document of the Conference. The purpose of this paper was to promote the implementation of an effective tsunami early-warning system for the Indian Ocean, which should later be extended to cover the Mediterranean region and the Atlantic. The tsunami early-warning system is a component part of an early warning system for the registration of other natural catastrophes including, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions.

## Preparatory process

A Preparatory Committee for the Conference was established on the basis of United Nations General Assembly resolution A/RES/58/214. It held two sessions, both at the Palais des Nations in Geneva.

### First session

The first session was held on 6 and 7 May 2004. An Information Note for participants was prepared to facilitate the participation of delegates and observers (**A/Conf.206/PC(I)/INF.2**), the list of whom appears in **A/Conf.206/PC(I)/IND.4**. The Preparatory Committee adopted its provisional agenda (**A/Conf.206/PC(I)/1**), and draft rules of procedure (**A/Conf.206/PC(I)/2**). The organization of the Committee's work and arrangements for accreditation and participation in the preparatory process and in the World Conference of relevant non-governmental organizations and other major groups were agreed upon

(**A/Conf.206/PC(I)/INF.1**). The Committee heard a progress report from the secretariat on the preparatory process of the WCDR (**A/Conf.206/PC(I)/5**). The draft annotated outline of the Review of Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action (**A/Conf.206/PC(I)/3**) was endorsed as well as the methodology for compiling the review, including the incorporation of national inputs. The Preparatory Committee also discussed and made recommendations on proposed elements for the programme outcome of the Conference (**A/Conf.206/PC(I)/4**). The report on the work of the first session of the Preparatory Committee was issued as **A/Conf.206/PC(I)/6** and **A/Conf.206/PC(I)/6/Corr.1**.

The Bureau was composed of the following members: Ecuador representing Latin American and Caribbean States (Chair); Federal Republic of Germany representing Western Europe and Others Group; Islamic Republic of Iran representing Asian States (Rapporteur); Morocco representing African States; Russian Federation representing Eastern European States; and Japan (ex-officio). (**A/Conf.206/PC(I)/INF.3**)

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### Second session

The second session of the Preparatory Committee was convened on 11-12 October 2004 in Geneva to discuss further organizational and substantive aspects of the WCDR. The Preparatory Committee adopted the agenda and organization of work of its second session (A/Conf.206/PC(II)/1). Delegates considered the accreditation of non-governmental organizations and other major groups to the preparatory process and the WCDR (A/Conf.206/PC(II)/7 and A/Conf.206/PC(II)/7.Add.1) and the provisional rules of procedure for the Preparatory Committee and the WCDR (A/Conf.206/PC(II)/2). They also endorsed the proposed format of the WCDR (A/Conf.206(II)/6), commented on the proposed partnerships mechanism in the context of the WCDR (A/Conf.206/PC(II)/9) and agreed on a proposed draft agenda for the WCDR (A/Conf.206/PC(II)/8). The Preparatory Committee heard from the secretariat a progress report on the preparatory process of the WCDR (A/Conf.206/PC(II)/5). The draft Review of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World was discussed (A/Conf.206/PC(II)/4) and the Preparatory Committee provided recommendations and guidance for the secretariat to further develop the document for its final consideration by the WCDR.

The revised version of the draft programme outcome document tentatively entitled "Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters: Elements for a Programme of Action 2005-2015" (A/Conf.206/PC(II)/4) was considered. It was agreed to set up an open-ended Drafting Committee to work on this document, as well as on a draft declaration and on the final version of the Yokohama Review. A report on the second session of the Preparatory Committee was issued (A/Conf.206/PC(II)/10) including the draft terms of reference for the Drafting Committee.

Tentative plans had been made for a possible third session of the Preparatory Committee, to be held in Kobe during the Conference. The Bureau agreed not to hold such a session, and documents A/Conf.206/PC(III)/1 and A/Conf.206/PC(III)/2 thus became redundant.

### Regional and thematic meetings

Regional and thematic meetings were organized by partner agencies in a variety of locations prior to the Conference. They contributed to the preparatory process from their relevant perspectives, providing inputs to the review of achievements and lessons learnt on disaster risk reduction and identifying areas that need to be addressed in proposing elements for future action.

*The list of regional and thematic meetings is available on the WCDR website and in the CDROM enclosed with this publication.*

#### President of the Conference:

Mr. Yoshitaka Murata,  
Minister of State for Disaster  
Management, Cabinet Office,  
Government of Japan

#### Vice-Presidents:

H.E. Mr. Hernán Escudero  
Martínez Ecuador; Mr. Hans-  
Joachim Daerr, Federal Republic of  
Germany; Mr. Mohammad Hossein  
Moghimi, Islamic Republic of Iran  
(Rapporteur); H.E. Mr. Omar  
Hilale, Morocco and Mr. Yury  
Brazhnikov, Russian Federation

#### Secretary-General of the

Conference: Mr. Salvano Briceño,  
Director,  
Inter-Agency secretariat of the  
International Strategy for Disaster  
Reduction

#### Coordinator of the Conference:

Mr. John Horekens

## Thematic sessions

Experts, practitioners, government officials, civil society representatives and the media participated actively in the various sessions of the following clusters:

- Cluster 1: Governance, Institutional And Policy Frameworks For Risk Reduction
- Cluster 2: Risk identification, assessment, monitoring and early warning
- Cluster 3: Knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience
- Cluster 4: Reducing the underlying risk factors
- Cluster 5: Preparedness for effective response

## Regional session

A regional session took place at the Plenary on 17 January 2005 allowing participants to exchange experience and lessons learned from each region.

## Public Forum

The public forum consisted of workshops, exhibition booths, poster sessions, and an NGO Centre. It was open to the general public and Conference participants.

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### List of conference documents

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| A/Conf.206/1         | Provisional agenda and annotations  |
| A/Conf.206/2         | Provisional rules of procedure for the Conference   |
| A/Conf.206/3         | Accreditation of relevant non-governmental organizations and other major groups to the Conference   |
| A/Conf.206/4         | Agenda of the Conference  |
| A/Conf.206/5         | Report of the Credentials Committee   |
| A/Conf.206/6         | Report of the Conference  |
| A/Conf.206/L.1       | Review of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World  |
| A/Conf.206/L.2       | Draft programme outcome document of the Conference. Building the resilience of nations and communities to disasters: [Hyogo] Framework for action 2005-2015 |
| A/Conf.206/L.2/Rev.1 | Draft programme outcome document of the Conference. Building the resilience of nations and communities to disasters: Hyogo Framework for action 2005-2015   |
| A/Conf.206/L.3       | Draft Hyogo Declaration   |
| A/Conf.206/L.3/Rev.1 | Draft Hyogo Declaration   |
| A/Conf.206/L.4       | Establishing regional mechanisms on surveillance, prevention and assessment of severe natural disasters (Draft declaration submitted by China)              |
| A/Conf.206/L.5       | Draft elements and considerations for a resolution on early warning for natural disasters (Draft resolution proposed by Germany)                            |
| A/Conf.206/L.6/Rev.1 | Draft common statement of the Special Session on the Indian Ocean Disaster: Risk Reduction for a Safer Future   |
| A/Conf.206/L.7       | Draft report of the Conference  |
| A/Conf.206/L.8       | Draft report of the Main Committee  |
| A/Conf.206/OD/1      | Daily programme, Tuesday, 18 January 2005   |
| A/Conf.206/OD/2      | Daily programme, Wednesday, 19 January 2005   |
| A/Conf.206/OD/3      | Daily programme, Thursday, 20 January 2005  |
| A/Conf.206/OD/4      | Daily programme, Friday, 21 January 2005  |
| A/Conf.206/OD/5      | Daily programme, Saturday, 22 January 2005  |
| A/Conf.206/INF.1     | Information note to the participants  |
| A/Conf.206/INF.2     | List of partnerships in the context of WCDR   |
| A/Conf.206/INF.3     | List of participants  |

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| A/Conf.206/INF.4 | Participation of intergovernmental organizations in the work of the Conference   |
| A/Conf.206/INF.5 | Information paper submitted by the delegation of the United States of America entitled "Development of a global tsunami warning system: U.S. next steps" |

## Preparatory Committee

### First session

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| A/Conf.206/PC(I)/1        | Provisional Agenda and Annotations   |
| A/Conf.206/PC(I)/2        | Provisional rules of procedure for the preparatory committee and the World Conference on Disaster Reduction  |
| A/Conf.206/PC(I)/3        | Draft annotated outline of the review of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action  |
| A/Conf.206/PC(I)/4        | Proposed elements for the programme outcome of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction  |
| A/Conf.206/PC(I)/5        | Progress report on the preparatory process of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction   |
| A/Conf.206/PC(I)/6        | Report of the first session of the preparatory committee for the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, held at Geneva, from 6 to 7 May 2004  |
| A/Conf.206/PC(I)/6/Corr.1 | Report of the first session of the preparatory committee for the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, held at Geneva, from 6 to 7 May 2004  |
| A/Conf.206/PC(I)/INF.1    | Suggested arrangements for accreditation and participation in the preparatory process and in the World Conference on Disaster Reduction of relevant Non-Governmental Organizations and other major groups  |
| A/Conf.206/PC(I)/INF.2    | Information note for participants  |
| A/Conf.206/PC(I)/INF.3    | Designation of the Bureau for the preparatory committee and the establishment of a special unit for the World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR) within the Inter-Agency secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR) |
| A/Conf.206/PC(I)/INF.4    | List of participants   |

### Second session

|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| A/Conf.206/PC(II)/1 | Provisional agenda and annotations of the second session of the preparatory committee                       |
| A/Conf.206/PC(II)/2 | Provisional rules of procedure for the preparatory committee and the World Conference on Disaster Reduction |
| A/Conf.206/PC(II)/3 | Draft Review of the Yokohama Review and Plan of Action for a Safer World                                    |

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|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| A/Conf.206/PC(II)/4       | Draft programme outcome document tentatively entitled "Building the resilience of nations and communities to disasters: elements for a programme of action, 2005-2015 |
| A/Conf.206/PC(II)/5       | Progress report on the preparatory process of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction  |
| A/Conf.206/PC(II)/6       | Proposed format of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction   |
| A/Conf.206/PC(II)/7       | Accreditation of Non-Governmental Organizations and other major groups to the preparatory process and the World Conference on Disaster Reduction                      |
| A/Conf.206/PC(II)/7/Add.1 | Accreditation of Non-Governmental Organizations and other major groups to the preparatory process and the World Conference on Disaster Reduction                      |
| A/Conf.206/PC(II)/8       | Proposed draft agenda for the World Conference on Disaster Reduction  |
| A/Conf.206/PC(II)/9       | Proposed partnership mechanisms in the context of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction  |
| A/Conf.206/PC(II)/10      | Report of the second session of the preparatory committee for the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, held at Geneva on 11 and 12 October 2004                    |
| A/Conf.206/PC(II)/INF.1   | Information note for participants   |
| A/Conf.206/PC(II)/INF.2   | Participation of Intergovernmental Organizations in the work of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction  |







## WCDR and the Media

The World Conference on Disaster  
Reduction: an opportunity to raise  
awareness on disaster reduction issues

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Media was a main activity before and during the World Conference on Disaster Reduction. It attracted much attention to the Conference's main issues and the process itself, and helped target audiences to better understand the meaning of disaster reduction.

- Some 560 journalists attended the World Conference on Disaster Reduction and wrote each an average of four pieces on Disaster reduction issues. The main subjects developed were disaster reduction, early warning and tsunami.
- The tsunami tragedy on 26 December 2004 had an enormous impact on the World Conference. That disaster of exceptionally high and visible proportions showed in a dramatic way that people could be severely affected by natural hazards. The tsunami was in the headlines for more than two weeks and boosted the interest of the media for the World Conference on Disaster Reduction.

### Media activities before the World Conference on Disaster Reduction:

- From June 2004 to December 2004, the Director of the UN inter-agency secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, Mr. Salvano Briceño and other ISDR experts gave regular one-to-one interviews to main TV, radio and press networks, thereby building interest in the World Conference: The Guardian, Le Monde, Alert News, National Geographic, Reuters, Agencia EFE, Agence France Presse, Associated Press, Inter press, The International Herald Tribune, The Economist, CNN International, CNN en Español, CNN Miami, Radio du Canada, Voice of America, El Pais, El Mundo, RAI Internazionale, France 2, TF1, TSR, Deutchewelle, O Estado de Sao Paulo, El Universo, Reforma, Washington Times, Agence Chine Nouvelle, Singapore Times, Autralian Radio Broadcast, Deccan Herald, Le Temps, la Tribune de Genève, Info Sud, la Jornada, Le Figaro, Corriere della Sera, BBC Newsnight, Der Spiegel, Jeune Afrique, Kyodo News, NHK, Asahi Shinbun, Mainichi Shinbun, Nikkei, Liberation...
- Other ISDR experts gave more technical interviews to media, helping to create a good network of regular contacts with key journalists. Those interviews raised awareness on the importance of the World Conference and played a key role when media desks chose to send or not a journalist to Kobe.
- Four visits to Geneva of the Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Jan Egeland, were seized as opportunities to raise awareness on the importance of the World Conference. Every visit attracted over 50 key journalists and generated a number of articles on the conference.
- From June 2004 to January 2005, the WCDR communication team used news items to boost disaster reduction issues and raise awareness on the issues of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction. Press releases were issued every month on disaster reduction with key messages announcing the objectives of the World Conference. News events such as the hurricane season in Florida and Cuba, the severe typhoon season in Japan and floods in Haiti, China, India and the Philippines provided opportunities to bring disaster reduction in the news. Those events were seen as good illustrations of what could or should not be done to avoid the negative impact of natural hazards. The example of Cuba was quoted as an illustration of what a poor country can do in terms of disaster reduction to save lives and reduce the negative impact of natural hazards. Floods in Haiti and the Philippines demonstrated how environmental issues and disaster reduction are intrinsically linked. Deforestation in Haiti and the Philippines clearly appeared to be the main causes for severe floods and landslides in those two countries. Those examples were used in TV reports (TF1, TSR, German TV, CNN) to educate the public at large. They created a huge interest on disaster reduction policies and on the importance of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction.
- A media section created in ISDR's website gave visibility to the World Conference. (<http://www.unisdr.org/eng/media-room/media-room.htm>).
- Other media events such as press conferences and press briefings were organized regularly in Geneva and gave more visibility to the Conference.

Media activities during the Conference:

- Two 30-minute video documentaries were produced by TVE (with direct financial support from DFID - UK and SDC - Switzerland) and broadcast 5 times on BBC World Service and BBC 24 hours between 17 and 23 January 2005 (450 million viewers). The two documentaries showed concrete examples of disaster reduction in Bangladesh, Democratic Republic of Congo, Cuba, Haiti, Iran, Japan and Switzerland.
- A 30-second TV spot produced for the secretariat by the advertising company Young and Rubican was shown on CNN to promote the conference and emphasize the impact of prevention.
- Six press releases were issued during the Conference. Press briefings and roundtables were organized on a daily basis. The communication team set up over 100 interviews with media networks from all over the world.

### **Conclusion**

Media activities before and during the World Conference were an indispensable means to highlight the importance of disaster reduction and to support ISDR activities. They contributed to disseminate key ISDR messages to a large public and raise awareness in a variety of audiences: governments, international organizations, NGOs, and the public at large. Through the media, the conference gave visibility and credibility to disaster reduction and contributed to the education and preparedness of people whose lives may be endangered or threatened by natural hazards.



# Annexes

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## Annex I

Opening statements

Closing statements

Civil Society statements

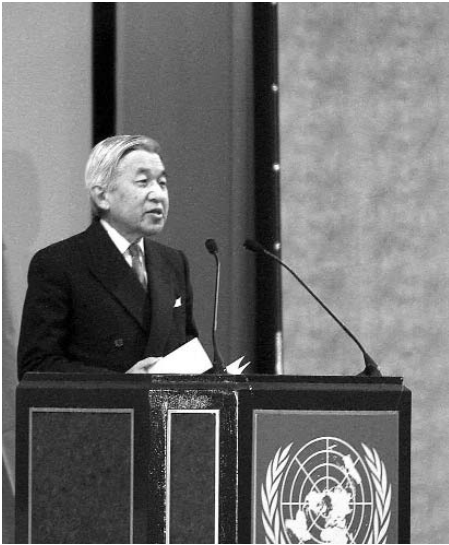


Photo courtesy of IISD/ENB Reporting Services/Kimo Goree, Franz Dejon

## Address by His Majesty The Emperor of Japan at the United Nations World Conference on Disaster Reduction

18 January 2005  
(Translation from Japanese)

I consider it highly significant that the United Nations World Conference on Disaster Reduction, with participants from all over the world, is being held here in Kobe City of Hyogo Prefecture, which suffered massive damage caused by the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake 10 years ago.

The huge earthquake and the accompanying tsunami which occurred at the end of last year in waters off Sumatra have caused damage not only in the surrounding countries but also over a widespread region, and it is said that the current death toll and the number of missing in total amount to more than 180,000. I wish to express my deepest condolences to those bereaved by this disaster.

Japan has been frequently struck by tsunami. A recent tsunami is the one caused by the earthquake off Southwest of Hokkaido of 1993, which inflicted heavy damage by earthquake and accompanying tsunami and fire on Okushiri Island and resulted in more than 200 fatalities and missing persons. We visited the disaster area about two weeks after the earthquake, and it was painful to see the terrible devastation there.

One of the major tsunamis recorded in Japanese history is the Meiji Sanriku Earthquake Tsunami of 1896, which killed more than 20,000 people. Later, in 1933, the Sanriku Earthquake Tsunami struck the same region again, and brought about 3,000 fatalities and missing persons. With almost a 40 year break between these two tsunamis, people did not have sufficient sense of vigilance against a post-quake tsunami in the second disaster, which is known to have expanded the damage.

This instance suggests that the most important factor in disaster reduction is to learn lessons from past disasters and to take measures in response. The theme of the 1.17 Declaration made at the Memorial Gathering in Commemoration of the 10th Anniversary of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake here yesterday was, "We shall never forget." I felt it crucial since I learned that one-quarter of the current population of Kobe did not experience that earthquake disaster:

Every day, all over the world, people are killed and tremendous damage is incurred by such natural disasters as typhoons, hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, and droughts. Since Japan is located in an active seismic zone, with mountainous topography marked by numerous volcanoes, and lies along a typhoon path, it has been struck by various natural disasters from ancient times.

However, as a result of concerted efforts made by the Japanese people to promote soil conservation and flood control, and to improve methods of predicting storms and floods and early warnings systems at times of disaster, in recent years, the number of fatalities per year caused by natural disasters has fallen. I am pleased to see that our disaster reduction efforts are paying off.

Damage from natural disasters may vary in their types and by region, but it is nonetheless possible to work across national boundaries, learning from past experiences, and preparing for future disasters, in the areas of prediction and disaster reduction measures as well as rescue of victims in the aftermath of disasters and recovery of disaster affected areas. As has been the case in the most recent great tsunami, international cooperation is essential for rescue and recovery efforts when large-scale damage occurs over a wide region, and I feel reassured by the participation of so many countries, including Japan, in aiding the disaster affected region.

This World Conference will look back on the disasters and disaster reduction activities that have taken place around the world over the past 10 years since the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction was held in Yokohama in 1994. It presents a precious opportunity to share mutual experiences, to protect lives and livelihoods of people from natural disasters, by aiming to strengthen preparedness and to create a society where people can live in safety and security. It is my sincerest hope that through discussions at this Conference, the knowledge and technologies Japan has developed over its many years of experience in the area of disaster reduction will contribute in some way to reducing damage caused by natural disasters in other countries around the world.

I would like to conclude my remarks, wishing that this Conference will have fruitful results, making for a safer world.



Photo courtesy of IISD/ENB Reporting Services/Kimo Goree, Franz Dejon

## Address by Mr. Junichiro Koizumi Prime Minister of Japan at the United Nations World Conference on Disaster Reduction

18 January 2005  
(Translation from Japanese)

Mr. Chairperson,

Mr. Jan Egeland, UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs,  
Honorable national delegates, and distinguished participants,

Thank you for travelling from all over the world to participate in this UN World Conference on Disaster Reduction. You are visiting here in Kobe, a city with rich historical and cultural atmosphere, and so as many other neighbouring cities in the region. I sincerely hope that all of you take this opportunity to visit around as much as possible and obtain deeper understanding of Japan.

The earthquake and tsunami that struck in the waters off Sumatra Island in Indonesia last month have wrought an unprecedented level of damage on the countries around the Indian Ocean. I would like to express my deepest condolences to the families of those who perished in that disaster and my sincerest sympathy to all of the nations and people who have been affected by this terrible tragedy. I would also like to express my heartfelt appreciation to all of the professionals and volunteers of the governments, international organizations, and NGOs who are courageously working on recovery and rehabilitation activities in the disaster-stricken regions.

Immediately after the tsunami dealt its terrible blow, Japan deployed vessels and helicopters of Maritime Self-Defense Forces that were on duty nearby to Phuket Island in Thailand for conducting search and rescue activities. Japan Disaster Relief Teams including medical teams were also sent into the affected countries to conduct relief operations. We now have plans to further strengthen our efforts there with activities to support transportation and to improve sanitary conditions. Japan has also pledged as immediate assistance US\$500 million in grant aid and is now consulting with the relevant nations about the moratorium of the debt payments of the disaster-stricken countries. Japan is also making great efforts to protect children, who are the most in need of emergency assistance. As a fellow Asian partner, Japan will take a leading role in carrying our recovery and rehabilitation in the affected countries.

In Japan it is said that "Disasters strike when you least expect them". We have learned this lesson from the bitter experience of having repeatedly lost numerous lives after unexpected earthquakes, typhoons, volcanic eruptions, and other disasters.

Did you know that the word "tsunami," which is now being used worldwide is a Japanese word? This is indicative of the extent to which Japan has been subject to frequent tsunami disasters in the past.

In Japan, stories about the heroic efforts of a particular village chief following a massive earthquake and the resulting

tsunami about 150 years ago are still being told today. This man noticed that immediately after the earthquake, the tide receded from the shoreline of his village out into the ocean. Remembering stories that had been passed down from his grandfather's generation, he realized that this was certainly an indication that a tsunami was on its way. No time should be wasted. He immediately lit a bundle of reaped sheaves of rice on fire and used it as a signal to gather the villagers and lead them to higher ground. Because of this rapid decision and action, many of the villagers were saved from the tsunami when it struck. After this event, the chief who saved the village used all of his own money to work with his fellow villagers on building a large seawall along the village's coastline. The seawall they built saved many lives when another tsunami struck that same village about 90 years later.

This story teaches us the importance of disaster reduction measures, such as remembering what we know and have been taught about disasters, quickly making decisions and actions, and always making everyday efforts to be prepared for an emergency situation.

Japan has experienced numerous disasters since then and has learned many lessons from them. Just 10 years ago, the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake struck here in Hyogo, causing massive destruction that resulted in the loss of more than 6,400 lives. Since that earthquake, the government and private sectors have been working together to promote the development of communities that are better able to withstand disasters. They have also been working to expand and strengthen the immediate response structures of the national government and the support capabilities of relevant institutions.

The various volunteers who came from all over Japan and around the world in response to this massive earthquake made contributions of a magnitude that was unparalleled in Japanese history and gave Japanese society an opportunity to see the importance of their role. Many regions in Japan faced disasters just last year, like typhoons, heavy storms, and the Niigata earthquake, that inflicted a great deal of damage on many citizens. In these instances, too, the support of many volunteers penetrated local communities and played an extremely significant role in the recovery and rehabilitation of the affected areas.

As a result of our experience, we have learned many disaster reduction lessons that we can share with the international community. In Papua New Guinea, where approximately 2,66 people perished in the 1998 Aitape earthquake and tsunami, many people died near the coastline after the quake. Immediately afterwards, Japanese experts (at Asian Disaster Reduction Center) produced easy-to-understand tsunami disaster reduction pamphlets and the national government worked to distribute them and raise awareness among the people living in coastal communities. These efforts were rewarded in 2000 when a magnitude 8 earthquake again struck the country. Although several thousand homes were destroyed in the earthquake, no lives were lost in the resulting tsunami.

In the Maldives, high waves that were generated by a cyclone in 1987 flooded one-third of the capital, Male Island. Thus, with financial assistance from Japan, a seawall was built. This seawall successfully protected the capital of Male from the recent tsunami, leaving it virtually unharmed and thus saving many lives.

In 1960, a tsunami caused by a magnitude 9.5 earthquake off the coast of Chile travelled half way around the globe to arrive the next day along Japan's Pacific coast. The waves caused a tremendous amount of damage and left 139 people either dead or missing. In regions that could be hit by a tsunami, it is important to prevent the loss of life by developing plans for rapid evacuation. Thus, systems for quickly notifying relevant countries that an earthquake has occurred and a tsunami is approaching are extremely effective. Based on what was learned from these lessons, a tsunami warning system was established for the Pacific region.

It will also be possible to save many lives in future Indian Ocean tsunamis if early warning mechanisms are rapidly developed for that region. In cooperation with the relevant countries, international organizations and other stakeholders, Japan proposed a special session at this conference for addressing this issue. This session will discuss the specific framework for an international tsunami warning mechanisms, and cooperation for educating and raising awareness among citizens, etc. Based on the discussions here, we are ready to assist the establishment of such mechanism through bilateral cooperation and support for UNESCO and other international organizations. To this end, Japan will, as an

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immediate action, implement training courses through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and also make financial contributions to the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR).

September 1 has been designated as Disaster Prevention Day in Japan. During the Disaster Reduction Week incorporating this day, more than 3.5 million people, including myself, participate in disaster preparedness drills all over the country. The repetitive implementation of disaster preparedness drills not only for those involved in disaster reduction work, but among the general populace as well, is extremely important for minimizing damage when an actual disaster occurs. A continuous crustal activity monitoring network to offer information on earthquake predictions is being constructed in the regions of Japan that have been designated as being likely to experience a major earthquake in the near future. If desirable, we would very much like to take an active role in introducing these kinds of noteworthy disaster preparedness measures to others.

As described in the materials that have been handed out to you, we are pouring our energy into such international cooperative efforts as:

- launching "Initiative for Disaster Reduction through ODA" and further support for capacity building on disaster reduction in developing countries,
  - the strengthening of ties with neighboring countries in the area of disaster reduction cooperation through the Asian Disaster Reduction Center in Kobe
- and
- the creation of a UN database of worldwide disaster recovery case studies.

Mr. Chairperson,

We are living in a time marked by conflicts and tensions derived from racial, religious, and cultural differences all over the world. Nonetheless, isn't it the common desire of all humankind to prepare against natural disasters, which can strike anywhere in the world, and to prevent damage and loss of human life? We need to overcome our conflicts and tensions, and help one another in a spirit of cooperation to achieve recovery and rehabilitation from disasters. We must fairly extend a helping hand to people who live in a wide range of circumstances. After the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake as well as the earthquake that struck last year, Japan received compassionate support from governments, companies, and individuals in countries around the world. Many people in Japan are grateful for this support and will always remember it. The city of Kobe, where we are holding this conference, suffered massive earthquake damage across a wide area 10 years ago, but since then, thanks to support from both at home and abroad, this city has travelled bravely down the road to recovery. As we proceed with this conference, then, I invite all of you to join me in putting our heads together on ways to further intensify our cooperative efforts to reduce the damage caused by natural disasters.

Finally, let me conclude my statement by saying that Japan will spare no effort in promoting the highest level of international cooperation on the sharing of information and knowledge, the contribution of human resources and technical support, and financial recovery support.

Thank you for your attention.



Photo courtesy of IISD/ENB Reporting Services/Kimo Goree, Franz Dejon

## Address by Mr. Yoshitaka Murata, Minister of State for Disaster Management, Government of Japan

18 January 2005

Your Majesties the Emperor and the Empress,  
Mr. Jan Egeland, UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs,  
Representatives of Member States, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen

I am privileged to address my sincere congratulations on this occasion of the United Nations World Conference on Disaster Reduction, which has attracted such a large attendance. I would like to extend, on behalf of the host country, Japan, a warm welcome to everyone present here. I would also like to express my deepest appreciation to the Conference Secretariat and everyone involved, for their dedication in bringing this Conference into reality.

At the opening of the Conference, I would like to express my deepest condolences to the people killed by the Sumatra earthquake and the following tsunami which occurred at the end of last year and my sincerest sympathy to the millions of people affected who are suffering from the devastations. The international community has shown strong solidarity in response to the tragedy. Japan, as a member of Asia is also providing support to the maximum extent possible. I pray for the recovery and rehabilitation from the disaster to be as early as possible.

In addition, the world has witnessed numerous damage caused by various natural hazards, which are recognized as great obstacle to sustainable development. Last year, Japan was affected by the a largest number of disasters in recent years. Just yesterday, we commemorated the tenth anniversary of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake. As such, I believe the significance of disaster reduction has received growing attention among people in Japan and throughout the world, and therefore this opportunity to discuss on building the resilience of nations and communities to disasters is truly significant.

We have to live with the risk of natural hazards. However, we can alleviate the suffering from hazards by reducing the vulnerability of societies. When Japan was poorly prepared against disasters in the devastated and vulnerable land after the World War II, every major typhoon cost us thousands of lives. Learning from these tragedies, Japan has since reinforce the systems for disaster management and invested in disaster reduction. Today, the number of victims from typhoons has been greatly reduced.

In Japan, disaster reduction is one of the most important policies of the Cabinet. Minister of State for Disaster Management which I hold, is one of the positions of Minister of State assigned to key cabinet policies for specific fields. I am responsible for the promotion of comprehensive disaster reduction efforts in the government. In addition,

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to push forward both efficient and effective measures for disaster reduction, Japan has created a multi-sectoral coordination mechanism called the Central Disaster Management Council, headed by the Prime Minister, which provides strong leadership in Japanese disaster management system. In my capacity of assisting the Prime Minister, I am striving to make my country disaster-resilient, not only in times of emergency but in ordinary times as well.

Nonetheless, our society is changing constantly, and Mother Nature confronts us with a whole host of unanticipated issues. Moreover, societal changes such as rapid urbanization and the aging population transform the nature of vulnerability to disasters as well, constantly requiring us to cope with new challenges. I was made painfully aware of this as I witnessed last year's series of major disasters. Keeping track of the causes of the vulnerability in light of the changing circumstances in societies, and taking concrete and tireless efforts through common recognition of every stakeholder to reduce disasters is vital.

Applying the knowledge and expertise acquired from numerous bitter disaster experiences, Japan has been an active facilitator of international cooperation for disaster reduction through ODAs and multilateral frameworks. Based on the discussions at this Conference, Japan will pursue to promote further efficient cooperation in the area of disaster reduction.

I strongly hope that this Conference will be the opportunity for the international community to take a great stride forward in the reduction of disaster impacts throughout the entire world, with a strong ownership of each Member State in terms of disaster reduction as well as in cooperation with relevant stakeholders.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.





Photo courtesy of IISD/ENB Reporting Services/Kimo Goree, Franz Dejon

## Opening Statement by Mr. Jan Egeland Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs United Nations

18 January 2005

*Their Majesties the Emperor and the Empress,*  
Excellencies, Colleagues and Friends,

We gather here in the shadows of one of the worst natural disasters in modern history, a tragedy whose dimensions may never be fully known. We just paid homage to the lives lost to the tsunami, and to the local and international relief workers who have responded so valiantly.

The best way we can honour the dead is to protect the living. We must meet today to take on this challenge with renewed urgency and vigour, knowing that we must translate words into deeds, and good intentions into concrete action. A famous Japanese proverb reminds us that: "Vision without action is but a daydream; action without vision is a nightmare."

My friends, we have no time to lose in our quest to make communities safer. Earthquakes, tsunamis, floods, locusts, droughts and other hazards wreak devastation for tens of millions of people each year. In addition to these natural threats, we now face threats of our own collective making: global warming, environmental degradation and uncontrolled urbanization.

Millions of people now live in dense, poorly-planned mega-cities with little basic infrastructure. Millions more live in the most seismically active locations or the most exposed coastal areas. As always, the poor are particularly vulnerable, for they lack the resources to withstand or recover from disasters.

As the tsunami tragedy has shown us, local disasters can have global impact. It has also reminded us that global risks require truly global solutions.

*Disaster risk reduction is not an additional expense* - it is an essential investment in our common future. As with all investments, there are costs we must pay today to reap greater rewards tomorrow. But the benefits of this investment will be calculated not only in dollars or euros or yen saved, but most importantly, in saved lives in every corner of the globe. For I tell you truly, we will all benefit from this investment in our collective future.

To those who say, "We cannot now afford to fund disaster reduction efforts." I ask that they consider soberly, "Can we afford not to? Disaster reduction efforts represent not only an opportunity and an investment, but also a moral imperative.

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This week, we must take action in three critical areas.

Firstly I urge this Conference to adopt the proposed Framework of Action, but with an accelerated timeline and clear indicators for building disaster-resilience at the local and at the global level. In recommending this Framework for Action, I would like to recognize the work that the ISDR and its global networks have undertaken. I would encourage them to push ahead boldly in their collective efforts meeting the test of performance on the ground, and passing stringent standards of accountability.

Let me be more specific with the following points for action that should all be achieved over the next 10 years:

All disaster prone countries should adopt clear, goal-oriented disaster reduction policies and action plans, underpinned by dedicated structures and resources;

People-centered early warning systems targeting vulnerable communities should be put in place in all disaster prone regions of the world;

Children - everywhere - should be learning about living more safely with the natural hazards around them, as part of their basic lifeskills education;

Communities - everywhere - should be better trained and prepared to handle disaster risks and protect themselves and their assets;

Hospitals, health centers and schools should be promoted as "safe havens" by making sure that new buildings are built to withstand earthquakes, cyclones, other hazards, and older buildings rebuilt or retrofitted.

Poor people should not be left to struggle alone against calamity: they deserve more access to meaningful financial risk-sharing arrangements such as insurance and reinsurance against disasters, through imaginative public-private partnerships; and

There should be intensified investment in research on developing and advocating more affordable risk reduction and mitigation technologies.

Secondly, I would propose that over the next 10 years, a minimum of 10% of the billions now spent on disaster relief by all nations should be earmarked for disaster risk reduction. In my other capacity, as the global Emergency Relief Coordinator, I am acutely aware of how much money is being spent on being fire brigades, putting plaster on the wound, and too little on preventing the devastation and suffering in the first place.

It can be done. The best results come when Governments and community organizations join together. As experience from Cuba, Ethiopia, Vietnam and so many other countries elsewhere has shown, losses can be significantly reduced when communities are alert to the hazards, and economies structured to reduce risk.

From the barren steppes of Mongolia to the flood plains of Bangladesh, traditional cultures have learned how to read nature's warning signals. They have taught their

young how to prepare for nature's mighty wrath, and they have structured their communities and livelihoods with an eye toward mitigating its destructive potential.

We would do well to learn from their traditional experience. Disaster reduction is not simply a matter of sophisticated technology and hardware; at root, it is also a matter of communication and education. Yes, we need a global early warning system, and UNESCO, ISDR and my colleagues and I at the UN are working with member states and partner organisations to make early warning for all a future reality. But let us remember: technology is not a cure-all. From Singapore to South Africa, experience shows us that people, not hardware, must be at the centre of any successful disaster warning and preparedness measures.

On this note, let me close with my third and final point. Disaster reduction and mitigation efforts cannot stand alone - to be successful, they must be woven into the fabric of a community's overall development. We need to radically revise our development models so that reducing and managing risk becomes central to sustainable development policy. Without this, the Millennium Development Goals will remain all but a mirage for many of the world's poorest and most vulnerable communities. We look forward to close partnerships in achieving this.

This is an ambitious but achievable programme. But we will succeed only if we put aside any differences, and make common cause for a common good.

We cannot fear the expense, we cannot falter in our efforts, and most importantly, we cannot fail in our resolve. The lives of millions depend on our turning intention into action here in Kobe.

In ending, I would like to thank the people and Government of Japan and the Hyogo Prefecture for their hospitality and their leadership. Yesterday, His Majesty The Emperor said, while commemorating the earthquake here ten years ago, that "we must build safe societies in which lives are saved from future disasters". That is indeed what our task is all about.

Thank you.



Photo courtesy of IISD/ENB Reporting Services/Kimo Goree, Franz Dejon

## Statement by Ms. Zenida Delica, on behalf of civil society organizations, researchers in risk management and disaster response

22 January 2005

Here we are. We all share the grief over the death of so many people killed by the tsunami. We all share the grief of millions of people left behind with their belongings lost. We all share the compassion of the neighbours, the students, the volunteers and the businesses who came out in solidarity to rescue and help. Soon followed by help and moral support from every corner of the world.

We are fortunate to be in a unique meeting that has the power to make disaster preparedness work. We have the responsibility to translate the world's grief and compassion into lasting commitments.

In this conference there are government delegates and representatives from civil society. The translation of the ideals of the conference into political action is the task of the governments, but the responsibility of us all. This statement comes from those of us in civil society who want to see the vision of the conference turned into action that makes a real difference to people, especially the most vulnerable people over the next ten years. We are almost at the end of the conference. Have we lived up to the expectations of those we represent? Can we go home and look the disaster victims and the people who came to their help in the eyes?

Passionate statements were made in this plenary. New insights exchanged in the thematic sessions. But they have not reached the outcome document.

In the dungeons of this conference, diplomats work until deep in the night on the outcome document. We see that governments are avoiding and eroding their responsibilities, instead of seizing this moment to make the strongest possible commitment. The outcome document does not reflect the spirit of the conference and the world around us. As it is now, it is a framework of vision and not a framework for action!

We have the knowledge for disaster reduction, what we need is the action. The most important condition for disaster reduction is the political commitment to remove the institutional barriers and integrate disaster risk reduction in the strategies and programmes for sustainable development and poverty reduction.

The years since the Yokohama strategy have confirmed the vital importance of disaster risk reduction. The problem was the lack of serious political commitment to institutionalise this vision into action. Disaster risk reduction has stayed in the margins of the relief structures. It must be incorporated in the Millennium Development Goals. The international community has prioritised health and education as basic needs. It is the time to do the same with disaster risk reduction.

We can and must reduce the numbers of people being killed and affected, and we must reduce the damage as proportion of the GDP. Disaster Risk Reduction is an essential element of development. In the next year you need to formulate targets and earmark funding to be able to take accountable and transparent action.

It must have been terrible to be the seismologist who saw the Tsunami happening on his computer-screen and was powerless to act. We urge you to make sure that the outcome document guarantees sustained political commitment that translates into concrete action that will make the world a safer place for all.



Photo IFRC

Statement by Mr. Tadateru Konoe  
Member of the Governing Board of the  
International Federation of  
Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

22 January 2005

The day before this conference began I stood representing the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and our worldwide network of National Societies at a memorial ceremony in the presence of Their Majesties the Emperor and the Empress of Japan, in silence, to remember those who died when the Great Hanshin-Awaji earthquake devastated this city ten years ago.

Our grief was multiplied by the emotion we all felt, surrounded by news of the loss of more than 225,000 lives and the unspeakable suffering of millions of people after the Asian earthquakes and tsunamis.

This conference has brought together the biggest gathering ever of experience and knowledge on disaster reduction. Many of the presentations and judgements were given much greater relevance by the fact that at the same time the largest disaster relief and recovery operation ever was in progress.

Our task now is to work with partners, including civil society organizations with a strong community base to find ways to transform the encouraging statements made by Governments in their plenary statements into the concrete action which has been demanded, but not yet framed.

We will be advocating for clear political commitment on some particular issues - such as firm targets and indicators - when the next stages of decision-making debate take place.

Another concern is the need for commitment for more resources to build community resilience and preparedness. Only with this can people themselves reduce risks and withstand natural disaster.

It is essential also that risk reduction measures should be brought into development strategies and programmes. This is a program entirely consistent with the Goals of the United Nations Millennium Declaration.

We believe that the large number of participants attracted by this Conference, and the vigour with which they pursued these and other important issues in the plenaries and the parallel events is a sign that the political commitment we are seeking can and will be found.

So we congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, the organisers, and of course our generous hosts the Government of Japan, for the progress which has been made in the identification of the way forward. We are sure that your energy will help all participants remain committed to the finalisation of the work which has started.

The conference may be over but the work will continue.

2005 must be remembered not only for the aftermath of one of the world's most catastrophic events but also as a watershed in disaster reduction. As 1995 - and Kobe - was Japan's.

Thank you Mr. Chairman

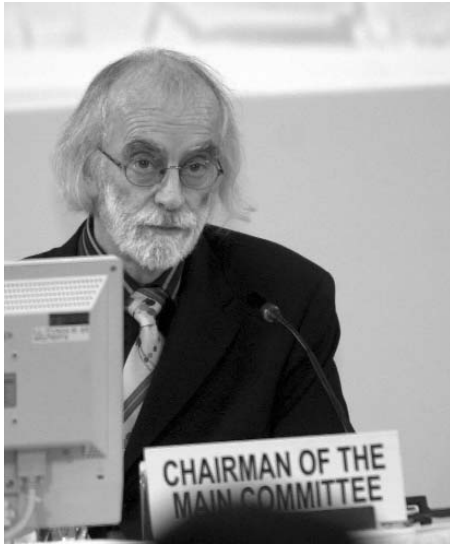


Photo courtesy of IISD/ENB Reporting Services/Kimo Goree, Franz Dejon

## Statement by Mr. Marco Ferrari Chairman of the Main Committee

22 January 2005

Mr. Chairman,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

In my capacity as Chair of the Main Committee of this World Conference, I have the honour and privilege to present for your consideration and adoption two main documents of this Conference: 1) the draft programme outcome document entitled "Building the resilience of nations and communities to disasters: Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015" and 2) the draft "Hyogo Declaration".

These two key documents are the result of a considerable process of consultation, deliberations and consensus building. There have been contributions from a wide range of stakeholders that have been taken into account. All these have led to this agreed collective efforts.

The Drafting Committee which became the Main Committee of the Conference has laboured long and hard, first in Geneva, Switzerland where it met from October 2004 until the time just prior to the Conference and subsequently over the last few days here in Kobe. I wish to express my appreciation and thanks to all those who participated for the excellent spirit of cooperation that has been manifested all along the arduous negotiation process, including during sessions that extended to late at night and even to the early morning hours. The Main Committee concluded its work in the early hours of today with a result that I believe, we can be satisfied with and proud of.

The Hyogo Framework for Action builds on the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World which was adopted in 1994 and has provided the international community over the last decade with landmark guidance on reducing disaster risks. The Hyogo Framework is based on the lessons learnt and gaps identified in the Review process of the Yokohama strategy that took place over the last year.

Drafting this document we have set ourselves the goal of elaborating a framework for action for the next decade with the expected outcome of a substantial reduction of disaster losses, in lives and in the social, economic and environmental assets of communities and countries. In the midst of our drafting process, the unprecedented tsunami disaster in the Indian Ocean dramatically drew the world's attention to the subject matter we have been dealing with. It heightened our awareness on the importance of stepping up efforts to reduce disasters everywhere.

In the Hyogo Framework for Action we identified the following five priorities for action for the next ten years:

1. Ensure that disaster risk reduction is a national and local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation.
2. Identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning
3. Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels.
4. Reduce the underlying risk factors.
5. Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response

For each of these priority actions, we have identified a number of concrete and specific measures and activities, which require implementation at different levels: local, national, regional and international. The Hyogo Framework also gives consideration to whom and how they should be implemented and identifies the respective roles and responsibilities of states, regional organizations and institutions and international organizations.

In the drafting process we dealt with numerous issues, some of which were politically sensitive and on a few we could reach consensus only thanks to the hard work and good will of all those involved.

I should also like to mention that we had to deal with many different expectations which of course could not all be met. Those who expected from this Framework for Action a concrete commitment of donors in terms of allocation of funding or the definition of targets and time-bound setting of objectives may be disappointed. However, I believe that we reached our key goal which was to come to a broad agreement of how to embark on and promote locally as well internationally a culture of prevention and disaster reduction.

The common understanding we reached on many key issues and which is reflected in the Hyogo Framework will facilitate, I am sure, the cooperation and partnership at all levels in the years to come.

I am convinced that this Framework for Action will serve as an important guidance in the collective endeavour of the international community to reduce, worldwide, disasters as well as the risks, vulnerabilities and adverse impacts associated with these. I therefore recommend this important document for adoption.

Mr. Chairman,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I also have the honour and privilege to present, for your consideration and adoption, the Declaration of this Conference : the "Hyogo Declaration".

Japan, as host country, prepared the draft of this declaration and it subsequently benefited from consultations in the course of the work of the Drafting Committee in Geneva as well as during this Conference. It is gratifying to not that delegates have been very enthusiastic in endorsing the considerations and statements contained in this declaration during the negotiations.

The Declaration reflects the sentiments expressed at this Conference, particularly having been deeply touched by the desolation and suffering resulting from the recent tsunami disaster. The declaration speaks for itself. It reflects the political will to pay increasing attention to disaster reduction and recognizes that it is critically important that the "Hyogo Framework for Action", be translated into concrete actions at all levels to reduce disaster risks and vulnerabilities.

I therefore recommend this Hyogo Declaration for adoption.

In closing, I express my personal thanks for the great privilege and opportunity to have served the international community in some small ways, as we endeavour to move towards a safer world in the future through enhanced disaster risk reduction. I wish to thank the Bureau members of the WCDR for all the unfailing support they extended to me over the last few months.

## World Conference on Disaster Reduction

18-22 January 2005, Kobe, Hyogo, Japan

I would also like to pay a special tribute to the ISDR and its staff who have worked so hard to make this Conference a success. My country Switzerland has been a strong supporter of the ISDR since its creation five years ago as a follow up to the International Decade for Disaster Reduction.

Finally, I would like to warmly thank our hosts, the Japanese government for taking the initiative to organize this important Conference and for being such great hosts. It has been a real pleasure to closely work with our host authorities, at Geneva level as well as here in Kobe in the Hyogo prefecture.

Thank you and aligato!





Closing remarks by  
Mr. Jan Egeland,  
Under-Secretary General for  
Humanitarian Affairs  
United Nations

22 January 2005

Friends and colleagues,

This Conference commenced in the shadow of the Indian Ocean disaster but ends with a strong message of hope in the shape of the Hyogo Declaration and the Framework for Action for the next decade.

The colossal tragedy intensified our obligation to define a road map for the future and to establish a clear framework for action to reduce risk, to build resilient communities.

We are gathered in the biggest venue ever to discuss and commit to disaster reduction: almost 4,000 participants; 168 States; 78 observer organizations from the UN and other inter-governmental organizations; 161 NGOs; and astonishingly, 154 media organizations represented by 562 journalists.

We know that our inability to reduce risk will hinder the realization of the Millennium Development Goals.

As a result of our deliberations and negotiations this week we have made a commitment:

- To pursue an integrated multi-hazard approach for sustainable development to reduce the incidence and severity of disasters;
- To place disaster risk at the center of our political priorities and policies;
- To integrate disaster risk reduction in all our development work;
- To strengthen the capacity of disaster prone countries to address risk;
- To invest substantively in disaster preparedness;
- To reduce the relief-development gap and thereby reduce vulnerability;
- To enable civil society actors and affected communities to strengthen their resilience to disasters;
- To reduce the gap between what we know and what we do, with the critical ingredient being political commitment; and
- To build on the momentum of this World Conference to accelerate implementation of the Framework for Action.

Together we have reached a milestone: Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the resilience of nations and communities. An ambitious agenda is set out in this Framework. We have promised to substantially reduce the losses in lives and social, economic and environmental assets of communities and countries.

## World Conference on Disaster Reduction

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It is my personal conviction that through the faithful implementation of this action plan in the next ten years, the number of deaths caused by natural disasters should be halved compared to those of last decade. Hundreds of thousands of lives and many millions of livelihoods will be protected.

It is also realistic to have all new schools and all new hospitals and clinics in all disaster prone areas made disaster proof.

We shall in the course of the coming years have national disaster reduction platforms in all the 168 States that have come here to Kobe this week.

The partners of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and the Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction have been requested to prepare measurable and achievable indicator in the coming months. Both indicators and targets were discussed in detail in the thematic sessions.

While the decisions at this Conference are not legally binding, they carry a strong commitment by States and organizations to guide our policies and actions in the next 10 years.

All country delegates I have met with have pledged commitment to invest in the follow-up, and make sure we act. We must not fail in its implementation.

Time is short, the task is huge. Progress is contingent on partnerships, on working together to meet this global challenge.

Dozens of such partnerships have already been launched or re-energized in Kobe this week, among Governments, civil society actors and the United Nations, including:

- An International Early Warning Programme: We already started as UN agencies and member States this week to put together a specific plan for supporting the tsunami early warning system for the Indian Ocean;
- An International Flood Initiative and programme, with a center in Tsukuba, for promoting research, training and flood protection;
- Many education initiatives for disaster reduction - and community training with direct links between learning centers and people in the field;
- An open Alliance to support Earthquake Risk Reduction- and Earthquake Megacities Initiative, working with city officers in megacities around the world to develop city disaster management plans.

In addition to the Priorities for Action for the period 2005-2015, we also have recommendations for implementation at all levels, including, importantly for our common strategy: the ISDR.

I note the request to the Task Force members and the secretariat to commence in the development of a work plan in support of the follow-up to this Framework for Action. I call on each of you to support this, and will personally look into ways to ensure that this is achieved as rapidly as possible.

Along with other principals of the UN organizations and agencies present, we have agreed to make each other accountable for ensuring follow-up to the various action points of the action plan and declaration. And for reminding each other and you, the member States, to ensure follow-up.

Such an ambitious endeavor will require guidance and know-how. This has been provided at the technical discussions that have taken place this week during three high level roundtables, the five thematic panels and 46 sessions, as well as the regional meetings and the rich and dynamic exchange of ideas that took place in the public forum, with examples and guidance on how to effectively apply disaster reduction.

The world may not be a safer place next week, but it should be in a year from now and certainly so at the end of the decade.

I, for one, am fully committed to working hard with the ISDR secretariat, the partners of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction and member States to ensure that the United Nations system strengthens its disaster reduction actions.

Finally, my sincere thanks to:

The hospitality of the people and Government of Japan, the Hyogo Prefecture and the City of Kobe,

The many hundreds of volunteers assisting us,

The many UN agencies, programmes and specialized organizations accompanying us here,

UN colleagues in the Conference services, security and interpreters,

The Conference secretariat, so ably led by our conference coordinator, John Horekens

The ISDR secretariat team, under the leadership of Sálvano Briceño and Helena Molin Valdes,

To Marco Ferrari, for steering the main committee to a safe harbour,

To you Minister Murata, for being a tireless and inspiring President of this Conference.

And to all the participants, thank you for making this Conference a success.



Photo UN/ISDR

## Closing remarks by the President of the Conference, Minister Yoshitaka Murata

22 January 2005

Distinguished Delegates, we have now completed our agenda and come to the end of our intensive gathering. As Mr. Egeland has said, this Conference has been a success. A success not only because we had a high number of participants (over 4,500 from over 150 countries with over 40 Ministers and 10 Heads of UN agencies), not only because we have had many very interesting thematic sessions and events in the public forum, not only because we have managed to adopt the texts that we had set to formulate. Successful because we have been able to put disaster risk reduction as a high priority on the international agenda. The tragic disasters we have witnessed in the last few months of 2004, culminating with terrible tsunami in the Indian Ocean, have brought home to many that it is high time to address disaster prevention, risk management, vulnerabilities as an unavoidable responsibility of States and of communities. There will always be hazards, but mankind has advanced enough in the past few decades to be able to protect itself from the tragic consequences that derive from the absence of preparedness. We have heard much about early warning in the past few days, particularly during the special session we had on the tsunami disaster. We have heard many verbal commitments in the past few days, from many countries. Let us ensure that this level of engagement is soon translated in real action. Let us make a firm pledge that the five days spent here in Kobe will make a real difference in the way we look at hazard, at risk and at vulnerability, and that we all truly engage on the road for a safer world.

Before closing the Conference, I would like to thank all participants for their gracious presence and their very valuable contributions. I thank the secretariat for their unfailing efforts and their hard work, whether in the substantive secretariat, the conference services or the Japanese secretariat. I thank the interpreters for their good work and flexibility, and the Geneva team of translators for their work and their patience. I thank all the staff from the hotel and other services that has made our stay a pleasant one. I hope you will all keep good memories of Kobe, Hyogo, despite the marathon sessions of the Main Committee. I wish you good luck in your endeavours, and bon voyage as you return home or fly away in other directions.

The World Conference on Disaster Reduction is now closed.

## Annex II

Resolution A/RES/58/214 adopted by the  
General Assembly on 23 December 2003  
International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

## World Conference on Disaster Reduction

18-22 January 2005, Kobe, Hyogo, Japan



# General Assembly

Distr.: General  
27 February 2004

**Fifty-eighth session**  
Agenda item 94 (e)

## Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[on the report of the Second Committee (A/58/484/Add.5)]

### **58/214. International Strategy for Disaster Reduction**

*The General Assembly,*

*Recalling* its resolutions 44/236 of 22 December 1989, 49/22 A of 2 December 1994, 49/22 B of 20 December 1994, 53/185 of 15 December 1998, 54/219 of 22 December 1999, 56/195 of 21 December 2001 and 57/256 of 20 December 2002 and Economic and Social Council resolutions 1999/63 of 30 July 1999 and 2001/35 of 26 July 2001, and taking into due consideration its resolution 57/270 B of 23 June 2003 on integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields,

*Recalling also* of the inclusion of the item “disaster management and vulnerability” in the multi-year programme of work of the Commission on Sustainable Development,<sup>1</sup>

*Emphasizing* that disaster reduction, including reducing vulnerability to natural disasters, is an important element that contributes to the achievement of sustainable development,

*Noting* the relevant provisions of the Ministerial Declaration of the Ministerial Conference of the Third World Water Forum, held in Kyoto, Japan, on 22 and 23 March 2003, on water-related disasters,<sup>2</sup>

*Reiterating* that, although natural disasters damage the social and economic infrastructure of all countries, the long-term consequences of natural disasters are especially severe for developing countries and hamper the achievement of their sustainable development,

*Recognizing* the urgent need to further develop and make use of the existing scientific and technical knowledge to reduce vulnerability to natural disasters, and emphasizing the need for developing countries to have access to technology so as to tackle natural disasters effectively,

<sup>1</sup> See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2003, Supplement No. 9 (E/2003/29)*, chap. I, sect. A.

<sup>2</sup> See A/57/785, annex.

*Expressing its deep concern* at the number and scale of natural disasters and their increasing impact within recent years, which have resulted in massive loss of life and long-term negative social, economic and environmental consequences for vulnerable societies throughout the world, in particular in developing countries,

*Recognizing* the need to continue to develop an understanding of, and to address, socio-economic activities that exacerbate the vulnerability of societies to natural disasters and to build and further strengthen community capability to cope with disaster risks,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction;<sup>3</sup>

2. *Invites* Governments and relevant international organizations to consider disaster risk assessment as an integral component of development plans and poverty eradication programmes;

3. *Stresses* that continued cooperation and coordination among Governments, the United Nations system, other international organizations, regional organizations, non-governmental organizations and other partners, as appropriate, are considered essential to address effectively the impact of natural disasters;

4. *Recognizes* the importance of linking disaster risk management to regional frameworks, as appropriate, such as with the New Partnership for Africa's Development,<sup>4</sup> to address issues of poverty eradication and sustainable development;

5. *Also recognizes* the importance of integrating a gender perspective as well as of engaging women in the design and implementation of all phases of disaster management, particularly in the disaster reduction stage;

6. *Further recognizes* the importance of early warning as an essential element of disaster reduction, and recommends the implementation of the outcome of the Second International Conference on Early Warning, held in Bonn, Germany, from 16 to 18 October 2003, which highlighted the importance of strengthened coordination and cooperation to integrate activities and expertise of the various sectors involved in the early warning process and has contributed to the review of the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation and its Plan of Action;<sup>5</sup>

7. *Decides* to convene a World Conference on Disaster Reduction in 2005, at the senior-official level, designed to foster specialized discussions and produce concrete changes and results, with the following objectives:

(a) To conclude the review of the Yokohama Strategy and its Plan of Action, with a view to updating the guiding framework on disaster reduction for the twenty-first century;

(b) To identify specific activities aimed at ensuring the implementation of relevant provisions of the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on

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<sup>3</sup> A/58/277.

<sup>4</sup> A/57/304, annex.

<sup>5</sup> A/CONF.172/9, chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.



Sustainable Development (“Johannesburg Plan of Implementation”)<sup>6</sup> on vulnerability, risk assessment and disaster management;

(c) To share best practices and lessons learned to further disaster reduction within the context of attaining sustainable development and identify gaps and challenges;

(d) To increase awareness of the importance of disaster reduction policies, thereby facilitating and promoting the implementation of those policies;

(e) To increase the reliability and availability of appropriate disaster-related information to the public and disaster management agencies in all regions, as set out in the relevant provisions of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation;

8. *Accepts with deep appreciation* the generous offer of the Government of Japan to host the Conference, and decides that the Conference will be held at Kobe, Hyogo, Japan, from 18 to 22 January 2005;

9. *Decides* to establish an open-ended intergovernmental preparatory committee for the Conference to review the organizational and substantive preparations for the Conference, approve the programme of work of the Conference and propose rules of procedure for adoption by the Conference, and also decides that the preparatory committee will meet at Geneva, following the 2004 semi-annual sessions of the Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction, for up to two days each time, and that it will hold a one-day meeting at Kobe within the dates mentioned in paragraph 8 above, as necessary;

10. *Also decides* that the intergovernmental preparatory committee will have a bureau consisting of five representatives of Member States elected on the basis of equitable geographical representation;

11. *Invites* regional groups to nominate their candidates for the bureau of the preparatory committee by the end of January 2004, so that they can be involved in the preparations for the first meeting of the preparatory committee, and to notify the secretariat of the Conference of those nominations;

12. *Requests* the inter-agency secretariat for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction to serve as the secretariat of the Conference and to coordinate preparatory activities, the costs of which will be funded extrabudgetarily through the Trust Fund for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and in close cooperation with the host country and the preparatory committee for the Conference, with the full support of the relevant departments of the Secretariat;

13. *Understands* that the activities set out in paragraph 12 above will not hinder the other existing work and priorities of the inter-agency secretariat for the Strategy;

14. *Invites* Member States, all United Nations bodies and specialized agencies and other relevant intergovernmental agencies and organizations, in particular the members of the Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction, to participate actively in the Conference, as well as its preparatory process;

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<sup>6</sup> *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

15. *Welcomes* contributions from all regions that could provide substantive inputs to the preparatory process and the Conference itself;

16. *Encourages* effective contributions from major groups, as identified in Agenda 21,<sup>7</sup> invites them to seek accreditation to the Conference and its preparatory process, and decides that their accreditation and participation will be in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Commission on Sustainable Development, the rules of procedure of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the established practice of the Commission on the participation and engagement of major groups;

17. *Decides* that the actual additional costs of the preparatory process and the Conference itself should be funded through extrabudgetary resources, without negatively affecting programmed activities, and through specific voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund for the Strategy;

18. *Requests* the Secretariat to provide conference services for the preparatory process and the Conference itself, the costs thereof to be borne by the host country, on the understanding that the Secretariat will ensure that its existing human resources are utilized to the maximum extent possible, without further charge to the host country;

19. *Encourages* the international community to provide the necessary financial resources to the Trust Fund for the Strategy and to provide the necessary scientific, technical, human and other resources to ensure adequate support for the activities of the inter-agency secretariat for the Strategy and the Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction and its working groups, as well as to facilitate the preparations for the Conference;

20. *Expresses its appreciation* to those countries that have provided financial support for the activities of the Strategy by making voluntary contributions to its Trust Fund;

21. *Requests* the Secretary-General to allocate adequate financial and administrative resources, within existing resources, for the effective functioning of the inter-agency secretariat for the Strategy;

22. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution, in particular on the state of preparations for the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, under the item entitled "Environment and sustainable development".

*78th plenary meeting  
23 December 2003*

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<sup>7</sup> *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I: *Resolutions adopted by the Conference*, resolution 1, annex II.



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